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Sierra Life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

Mono Lake Committee Founder

David Gaines

in memory of his life

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A young bear prepares to escape danger by climbing a tree.

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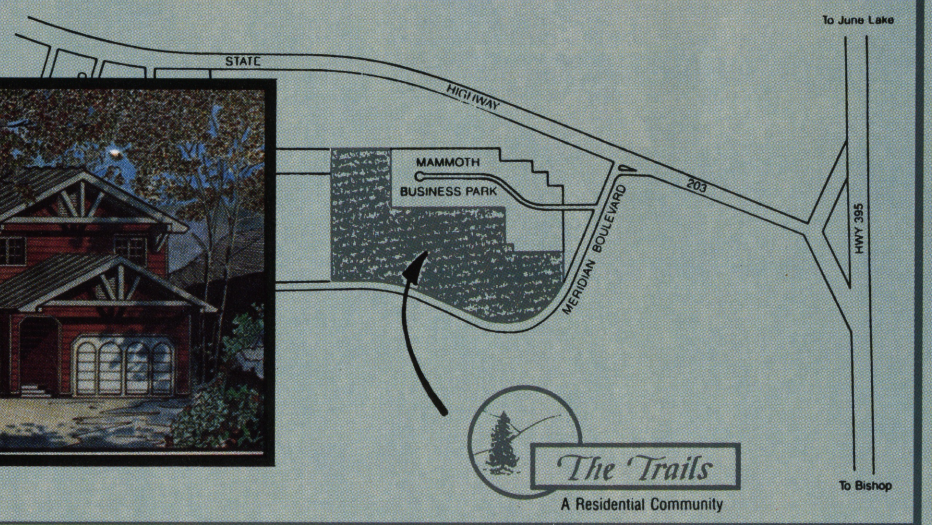

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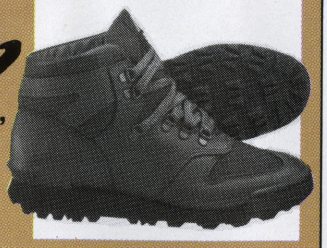

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LETTERS

Editor:

Regarding your recent article about Lt. Steeves and his missing T-33 jet trainer . . .

About four years ago I was up in the area where the jet supposedly went down and saw the remains of a plane crash. It was obviously old and spread out over a large area.

We didn't have time to investigate as we had just come over the harrowing Echo Col and were quite anxious to get down to Echo Lake below.

Although this particular Col is not in the shaded region shown on your map in the magazine, it is quite close. The exact location of the plane crash we saw is on the North side of Echo Col at approximately the 12,300' level. Echo Col is 5 miles South of Lake Sabrina and about 3/4 of a mile due east from Mt. Powell.

I have no idea if this crash is a T-33 trainer or a Piper Cub, but it sounds to me like one of those folks in the article would probably want to check this out.

The Echo Col area is quite rugged and not recommended for the faint of heart.

I really enjoy your magazine—it has a wonderful rough edge to it. Please don't get slick.

Tom LeMenager
El Cajon, CA

Editor:

Today I bought your May/June 1988 at my favorite newsstand in Missoula. It was the first time that I'd seen Sierra Life.

I hope to hike, explore and fish in the Sierra. I've hiked all over the Rocky Mountain Region.

I'm interested in any articles you may have done on Golden Trout and would appreciate it if you would send me information on them.

Have a nice summer!

John Reeves
Missoula, Montana

FROM THE PUBLISHER

I wasn't always an environmentalist. My transition was a profound one, following a series of "consciousness-raising" events in my life.

Even after finally reaching the point that I was able to admit to myself that I was, indeed, an environmentalist, it took me almost a year before I was able to profess it in public.

Never having been known for my tact or my timing, it followed that I would announce my new-found way of life at the worst possible moment.

Imagine a social gathering of some of our country's leading business types. The conversation has turned to the virtues of nuclear power plants. You've got the picture . . . your Mountain Maiden of literary circles decides to blast them. E.F. Hutton could not have created a more deafening silence. Not, of course, leaving well enough alone at this point, I went on to describe what might happen should one of the "safe" little power generators be mishandled and blow up. I was assured that this was impossible.

Fifteen years have slipped by since that poolside gathering in Palm Springs. A nuclear plant *has* blown up, and my "anti-environmentalist" business associates now contribute to causes such as the Mono Lake Committee and backpack in the Sierra each summer. The impossible becomes the possible.

Life, after all, appears to be a series of events designed to raise our consciousness to a higher level, one that will allow us to sit quietly on a mountainside and enjoy the sunrise . . . and to be patient with those who can't.

Sandie Pramann
Publisher

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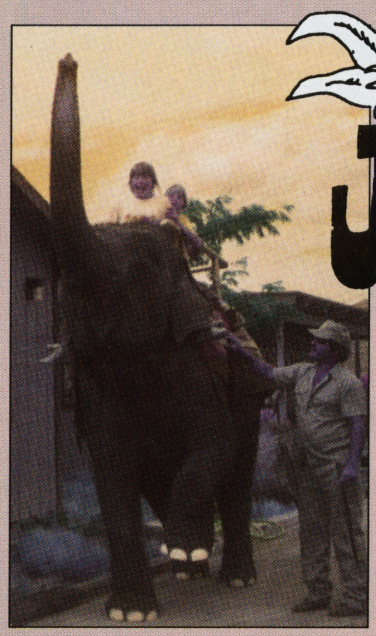

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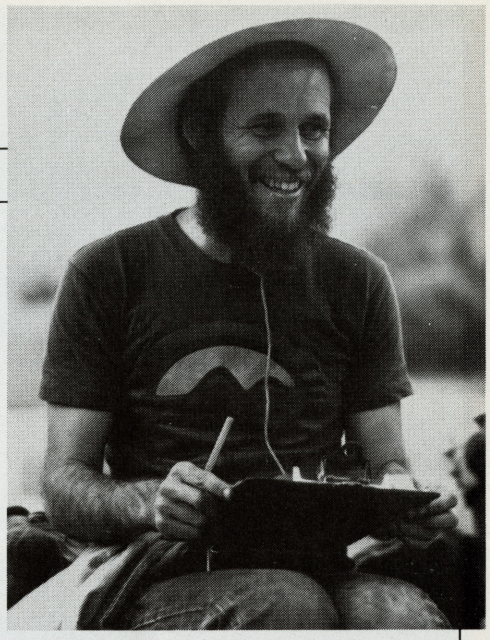

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OUR COVER: Gulls take flight over Mono Lake. Photo by Mike McWherter.

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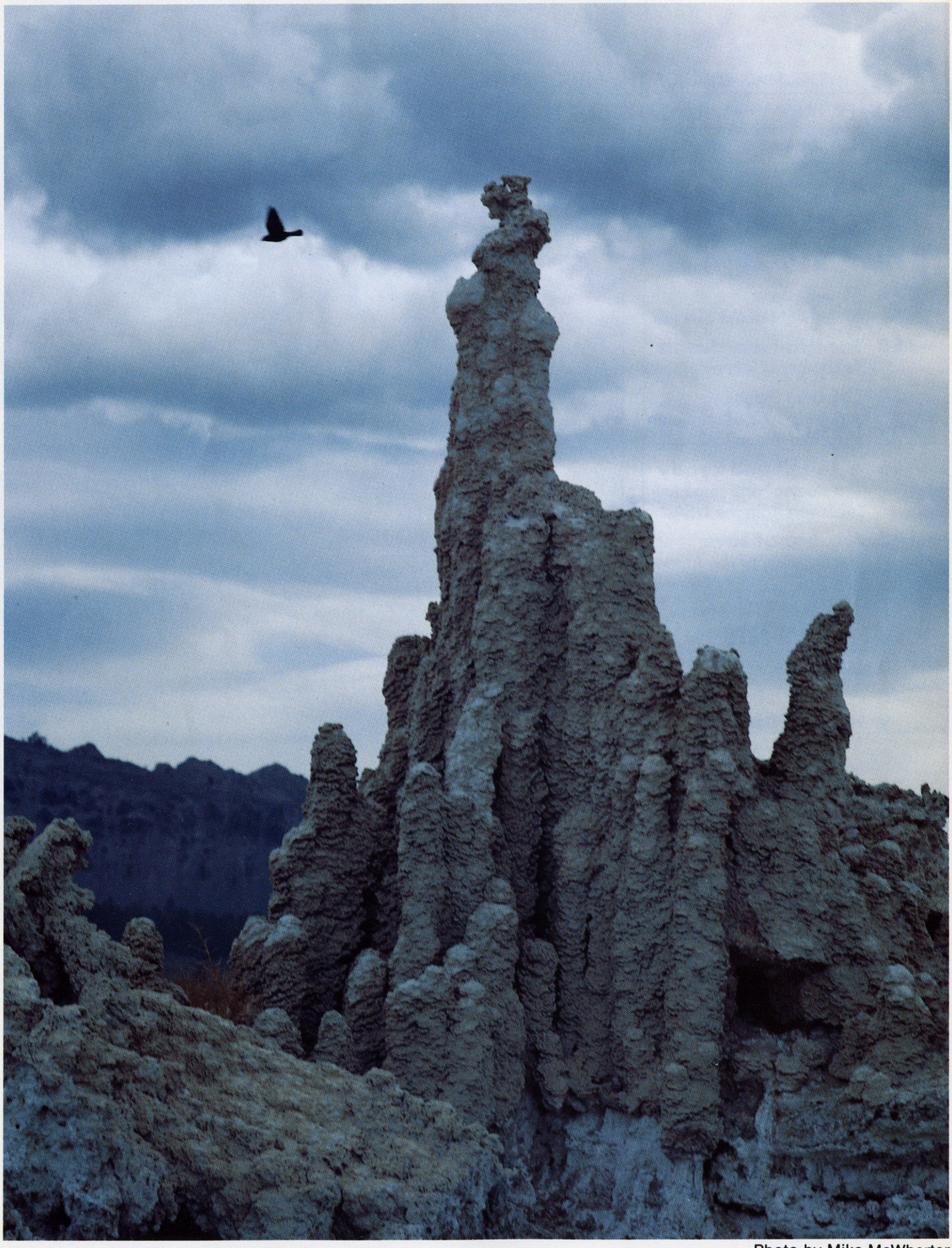


A lone gull takes flight over Mono Lake Tufa Tower

Photo by Mike McWherter

On Monday, January 11, 1988, David Gaines, founder and chairman of the Mono Lake Committee, was killed when the car in which he was riding was struck by a pickup truck amidst windblown snow on U.S. 395 near Mammoth Lakes. This story is not about his death, however, but about his life, which extended beyond the conventional boundaries.

DAVID GAINES:
The Reluctant Crusader

"This solemn, silent sailless sea—this lonely tenant of the loneliest spot on earth—is little graced with the picturesque."
— Mark Twain, 1860's, on Mono Lake.

"A country of wonderful contrasts. Hot deserts bounded by snow-laden mountains, cinders and ashes scattered on glacier-polished pavements, frost and fire working together in the making of beauty."
— John Muir, 1860's, on Mono Lake.

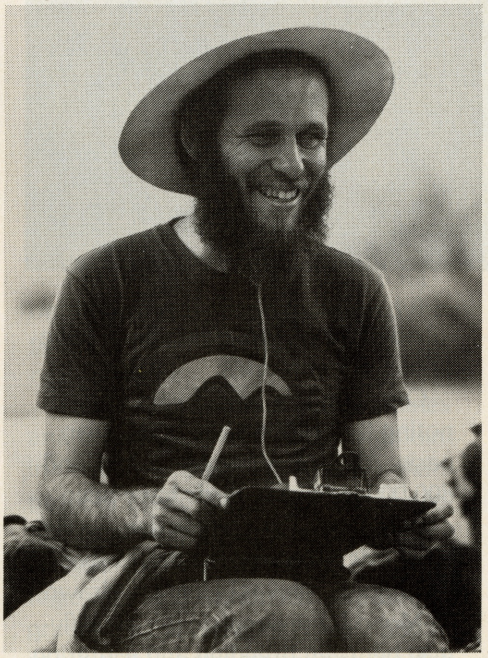
"The lake has no rival anywhere else on earth. Its dramatic islands, sweeping shorelines, volcanoes and limestone towers comprise one of America's most extraordinary national treasures."
— David Gaines, 1980's, on Mono Lake.

by Steve Boga

The object of these divergent opinions is, today, a 35,000-acre patch of cobalt-blue water east of Yosemite and 10 miles from the Nevada border. An ancient Lake (one to three million years old, they say), this unusual body of saline water is flanked on one side by towering Sierra peaks and on the other by a moonscape of volcanic craters.

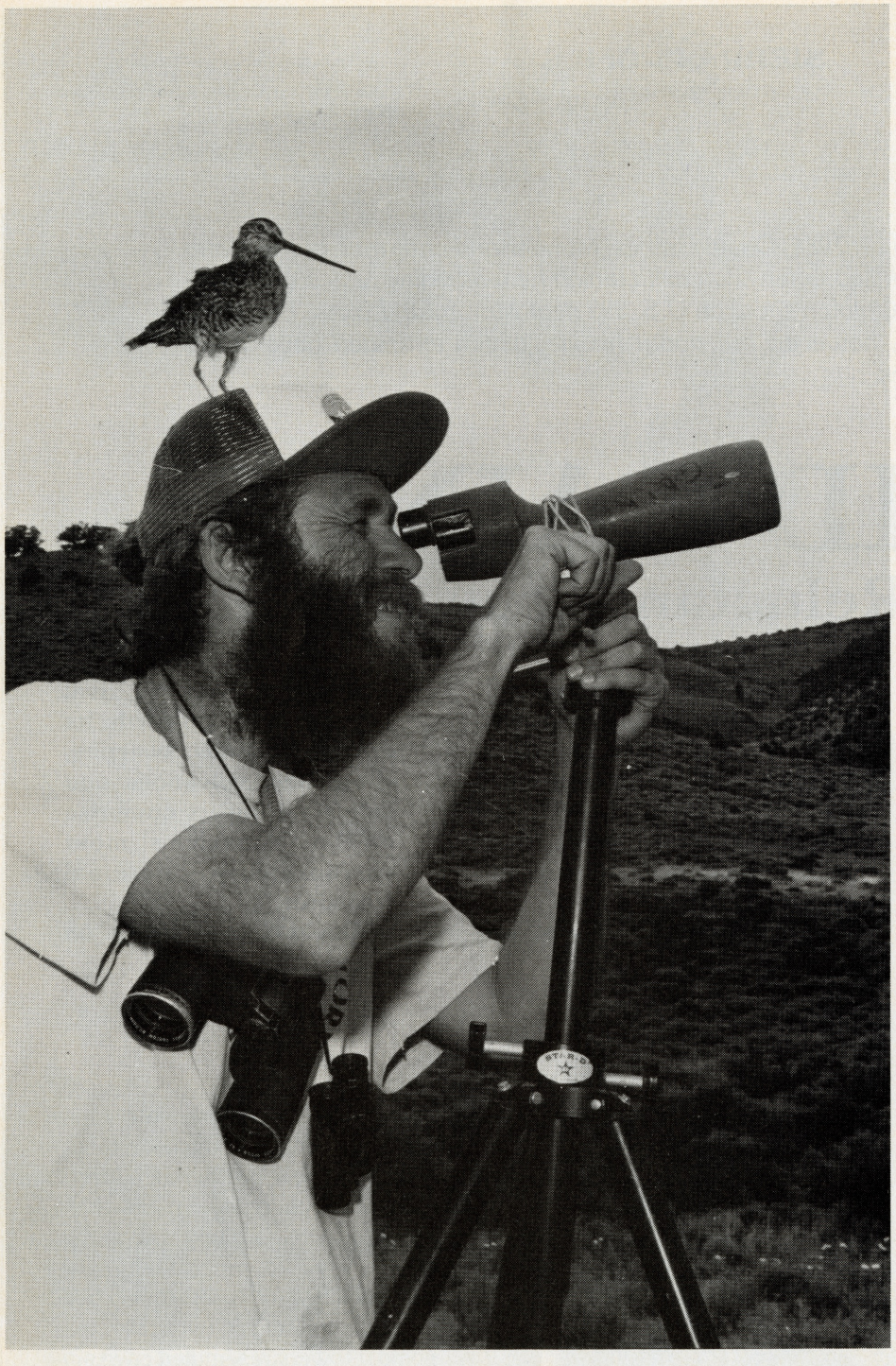
Back in Mark Twain and John Muir's day, Mono Lake was fed by five fresh-water streams that ran down the Sierra into the basin. Then, as today, it was a terminal lake—that is, except for evaporation, there was no exit for the water that flowed into the lake.

Although the inlet streams were fresh and sweet, they contained large amounts of dissolved minerals like sodium chloride, sodium sulphide and sodium carbonate. Once these salts reached the lake, they remained there pretty much forever. In addition, there were freshwater springs that welled up through the floor of the lake, precipitating salts that solidified into grotesquely beautiful tufa columns. Chemically, the spindly towers resembled cave stalagmites; but being more vulnerable to the elements, they were quite porous, as though ravaged by termites.



David Gaines

When Mark Twain called Mono a "dead sea," he admitted that he used the term loosely to describe a body of water devoid of "decent" animals: "No fish, no frogs, no snakes, no polliwogs," he wrote, "nothing in fact that goes to make life desirable." Desirable for humans perhaps, but birds love Mono, mainly because of their fondness for a feathery crea-



David Gaines and Friend Survey the Scene on the Shore of Mono Lake.

ture called the brine shrimp. About a half-inch long, resembling a fisherman's fly, it looks as though it were made of white thread splayed out at the sides. Current scientific opinion holds that trillions of brine shrimp inhabit Mono, something birds have known for centuries.

One wonders how Twain missed noting that Mono Lake is an avian oasis. About a hundred species and 800,000 individual birds have been counted there in a single day—gulls, bluebirds, phalaropes, teal, grebes, sandpipers, plover. They are drawn to Mono Lake because it is on a flyway between breeding and wintering grounds and because the brine shrimp (and brine fly) make the lake a rich and dependable refueling station. For example, a third of the world's 300,000 Wilson's phalaropes stop, rest and feed at Mono Lake en route from their Canadian nesting grounds to their winter homes in South America. As many as 50,000 California gulls—95% of those in the state and one in five of those in the world—have traditionally flocked to the lake to nest, most of them on Negit Island.

The Department

That was the situation the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (forever more known as DWP) found in the 1930's. With an eye to future water needs, they had begun to buy up land around Mono Lake. Already, they were in the process of draining Owens Lake, 150 miles to the south, and their avaricious search for more water brought them inevitably to Mono Lake. In 1941 DWP extended their aqueducts north and began diverting four of the five streams that fed the lake, sending the water rushing 338 miles to a panting Los Angeles.

What Los Angeles got from Mono Lake was 100,000 acre-feet of water a year, or 17 percent of its total demand. As there was a drop in elevation of nearly 6,400′ between Mono and L.A., they also got electricity—300 million kilowatt hours a year, or 1% of the total used by Los Angeles.

What exactly Mono Lake lost to Los Angeles could only be seen by someone with special vision.

The Man

Born in Los Angeles in 1947, David Gaines was graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz with a degree in German literature. In 1973 he earned a master's degree in ecology from U.C. Davis, completing his thesis on nesting riparian avifauna of the Sacramento Valley. While at Davis, he also met his future wife, Sally, on a bird-watching trip. Five years his junior, she was a botany major who shared his love for nature and heartfelt appreciation for life.

In the ensuing years David bounced between a series of jobs: teaching college biology and ecology, conducting endangered species

David and Sally Gaines with children Vireo and Sage. October 1987

research, working as a biological consultant for the Point Reyes Bird Observatory. In 1976 he received a grant to study the Mono Lake ecosystem. Bits and pieces of Mono Lake had previously been examined in isolation—geology, ornithology, limnology—but this was to be the first time it was all integrated into one study.

Gaines had first seen Mono Lake as a teenager from the top of Mt. Dana, a 13,000-foot peak in eastern Yosemite. Intrigued even then with its subtle beauty, he subsequently persuaded his parents to take vacations on the east side of the Sierra. Until he was a graduate student, however, he remained oblivious to Mono Lake's problems. "Growing up in Los Angeles," he said, "I never connected the city with Mono Lake. The water came out of the tap—how it got there was not something you learned about in school or read about in the newspaper."

Sending David Gaines to study Mono Lake was somewhat akin to sending Ralph Nader to study the nuclear power industry. That is to say, the results were predictable. As a scientist studying the Mono ecosystem, he experienced a sort of rebirth. Struck once again by the unsung beauty of the Mono Basin, as well as the dearth of scientific data on the place, he soon developed the passion that would direct him for the rest of his life.

That study—conducted by Gaines and others—signalled a turning point in the lake's history. It offered solid proof of Mono Lake's importance to millions of birds—as a nesting sight for gulls and plovers and as a strategic refueling station for migrating grebes and phalaropes. It also documented the various niches in the delicate ecosystem that supported this incredible birdlife: mineral-rich lake water, bacteria, sunlight, algae, brine flies and brine shrimp. Remove any one of those components and nature would spin out of control.

Gaines spent much of the next two years lobbying for the lake. He went on the road, giving lectures and slide shows to environmental and civic groups throughout the state. He spoke—passionately, eloquently—on what Mono Lake was, what it is and what it was in danger of becoming. He garnered support from the National Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, and convinced many individuals to donate time, money and energy to saving Mono Lake.

He told people what he'd learned in his study of Mono Lake—that the water level in one of nature's treasures was dropping precipitously—more than a foot a year-and that by continuing to divert all but one of the lake's tributaries, the DWP was

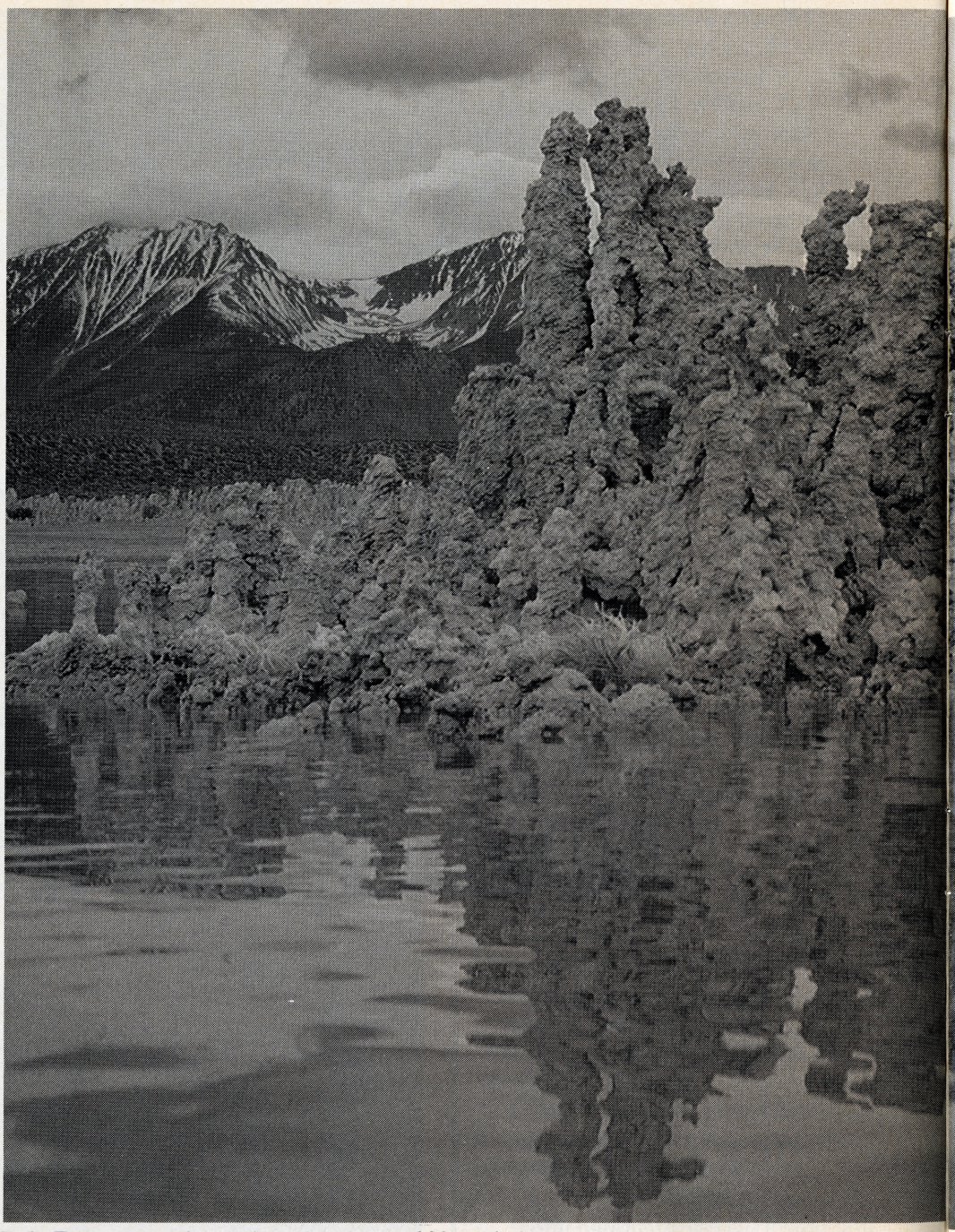
threatening to destroy a very delicate ecosystem, just as they had done 150 miles to the south with the now moribund Owens lake. Already, Mono Lake's surface area had shrunk from 86 to 61 square miles, exposing 16,000 acres of alkaline lake bottom. Vast clouds of toxic dust—sometimes reaching as high as 20,000 feet—were blowing in the wind. When the not uncommon dust storms kicked up in the Mono Basin, visibility could plummet to less than 40 feet.

But the biggest losers under the water diversion plan were not humans, but birds. DWP was threatening the very existence of millions of waterfowl. This was happening in two big ways:

First, the sinking water level was turning Negit Island into a peninsula. Gulls had traditionally nested there—as many as 30,000—and a land bridge to the island meant that predators—primarily coyotes—could wreak havoc on newborn chicks. (As Gaines predicted, the falling water level opened a land bridge to the island in the summer of 1978. The National Guard tried to blow up the bridge with explosives, but that didn't work. They built a fence, but that didn't work either. So, in 1978, for the first time in recorded history, coyotes sauntered across to Negit. "There was disaster on Negit," said Gaines. "Not a chick survived.")

Second, Gaines argued, the present diversion rates assured that the salinity of the lake would continue to increase. (Today it contains about 300 million tons of salts—three-quarters of a pound for each gallon of water—making it three times saltier than the oceans.) Inevitably, if this kept on, the shrimp population would collapse. And no shrimp meant no birds. In which case Mono Lake would indeed become, as Mark Twain called it, "the Dead Sea of California."

Gaines prodded his listeners with these questions:
1) How long can the birds cope with the increasingly bitter waters of Mono Lake?
2) Will the increasing salinity threaten the shrimp population, turning the lake into a sterile sump?
3) If the shrimp go, can the birds be far behind?



Tufa Towers stand guard on the shore of Mono Lake.

He was rational and persuasive, and above all, perserverant. He gave the same talk and slide show twice a day for months, and when his wife asked him how he could do it, he answered, "Because I'm a great actor." But, of course, such a remark conveys the wrong impression, for what really enabled him to do his work was an unwavering belief in a cause greater than himself. Even in his most rational moments, his emotional attachment to Mono Lake was palpable: ". . . while I count the clouds, take Mono's pulse and align myself with the changing seasons."

Plus, he was just so damn reasonable:
"We can save Mono Lake without anyone in Los Angeles going thirsty," he would say. "All it requires is modest water conservation in the city and the effective recycling of waste water by the DWP. . ."

Or: "The results (of continued

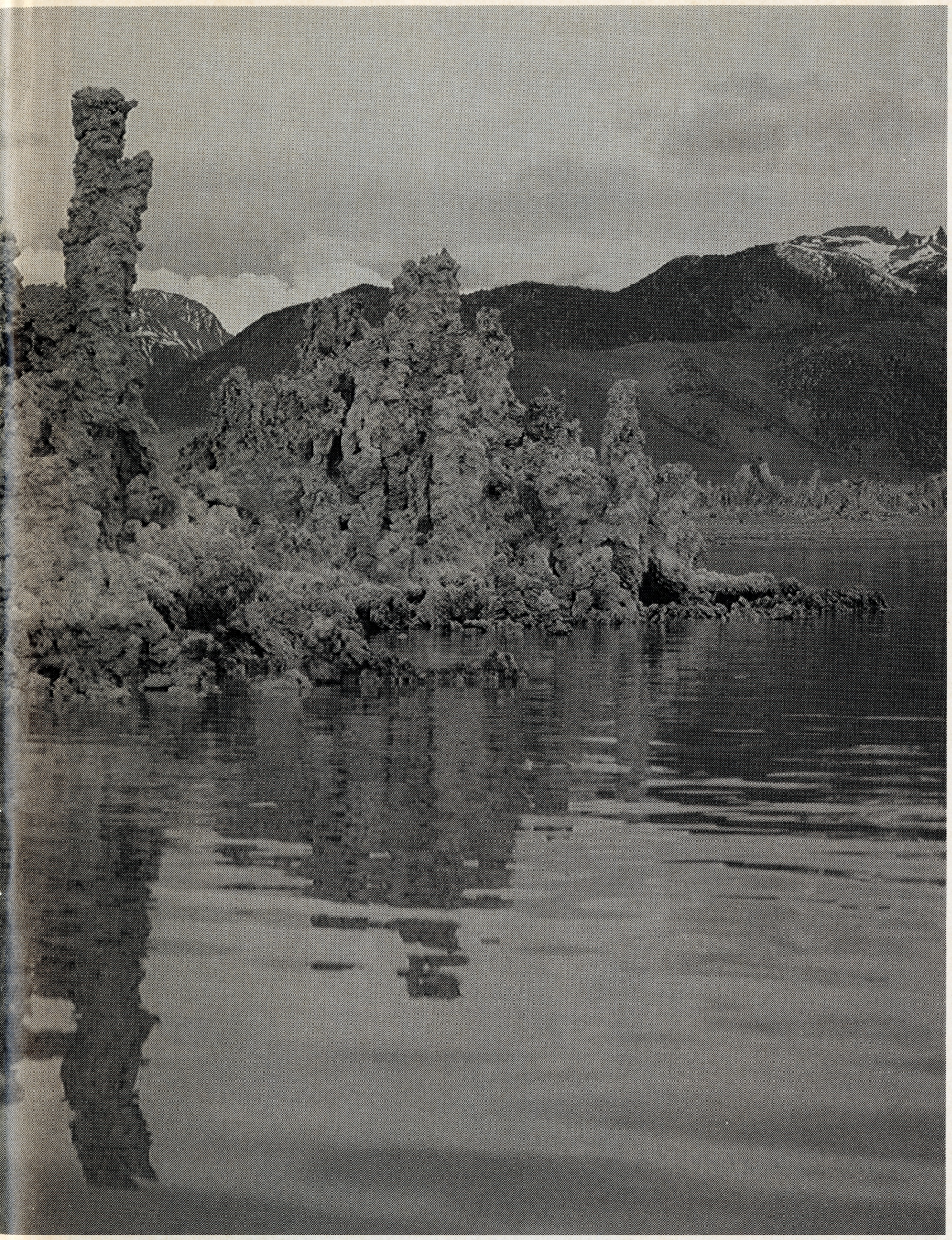


Photo by Mike McWherter

water diversion) could be disastrous to the entire ecosystem . . . we are asking the DWP to share water during years of average and above-average precipitation. Gradually the lake level would rise, reflood the land bridge and reduce salinity. With much of the shoreline dust underwater, the air-pollution problem would be eased, too."

Or: "The birds and animals, trees and grasses, rocks, water and wind are our allies. They waken our senses, rouse our passions, renew our spirits and fill us with vision, courage and joy . . . We are Mono Lake."

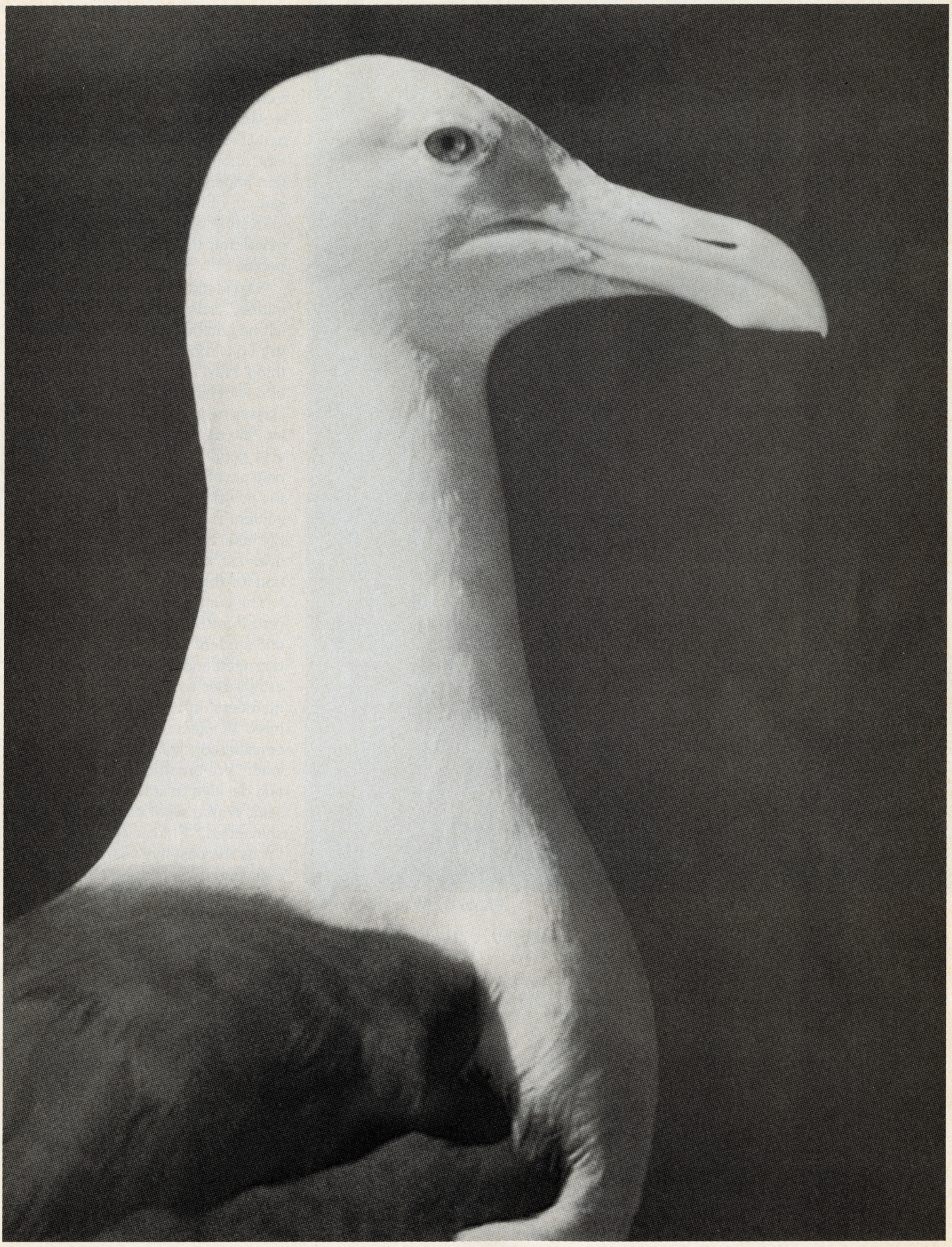
The message—and the messenger—had great appeal. Lanky and small-framed, flyaway salt-and-pepper hair, engaging smile, Gaines would stand before an audience dressed—if he could get away with it—in blue jeans, wearing a scraggly beard, "not an arrogant bone in his body," and people would listen. And what's more, believe. They offered money and help in sufficient numbers that in 1987 David and Sally founded the Mono Lake Committee. They established headquarters in Lee Vining, a tiny town near the retreating shores of Mono, and began a campaign to save the lake from extinction. That campaign would grow to include numerous activities: creating and distributing educational programs, issuing position papers, sponsoring seminars, litigating, running a natural history and map store and publishing a quarterly newsletter that now reaches 16,000 people.

"David didn't want to start a committee," Sally said candidly. "But he felt he couldn't just watch the lake dry up without trying to do something. He'd much rather have gone bird watching or taught the bird classes he loved. He hated the lobbying, the managing people. He wasn't very good at it and he hated it. The only part he really liked doing was the newsletter. Oh, and taking influential people out canoeing on the lake. He thought that was the quickest way to build an appreciation for this place."

The committee drew on the resources of Monophilic volunteers and student interns, and eventually recruited enough money to pay modest salaries to a few dedicated staff members. In 1983 the committee hired an executive director, which considerably lightened the Gaines load. "We breathed a sigh of relief and decided to start a family," Sally said. With a slight catch in her voice, she added, "Things were really good for us the past five years." David and Sally had two children, naming them Vireo (after a bird genus) and Sage ("A two-way name," says Sally. "Plant or wise person.")

David was, in Sally's view, the classic modern father, always willing to share equally the child-care duties. "We'd get up in the morning and he'd say, 'How are we going to divide up the day?' Meaning when am I going to work and when am I going to watch the kids?"

When it was his turn to watch the kids, he liked to take walks with them, always carrying his mandolin. Says Lauren David, MLC editor: "You'd see him walking to the post office practicing his mandolin. He



Mono Lake Gull

Photo by Mike McWherter

always had that mandolin." Sally suggests that his love for music rivaled his love for nature, offering up his record collection—3,000 discs, primarily blues, jazz and ethnic music—as evidence. "David also played the piano, but he hardly ever practiced because when he did the kids would invariably jump up on his lap." Gaines was also in a band that played weekend gigs on the east side. And he frequently wrote songs about Mono Lake. Davis, who played in that band, said, "David's songs about Mono were usually humorous. You have to have that perspective because there are a lot of tensions. If you don't, you sink."

As for work, Gaines did most of it in his study at home, which contained a small computer, a typewriter and a wealth of books—subjects ranging from poetry to Jewish history to Native American religious traditions. "He was a gentle scholar," says Sally.

Sharing a mutual love for nature and books, David and Sally started a small publishing company in their home—Artemisia (the Latin name for sagebrush) Press. A breakeven proposition at best, Artemisia has done a half-dozen books on birds, local history and geology. "David was a true Renaissance Man," says Davis. "He was a classic naturalist like John Muir. He showed a wide range of interests in his writings, but there were usually spiritual overtones."

Though born Jewish, David grew up fairly detached from his religion. This, according to Sally, "bothered him" and he began to read voraciously on comparative religions. He read the Bible and various other religious tomes; but when you came right down to it, his personal philosophy consisted mostly of borrowings from several Indian tribes. Indeed, his writings smack of pantheism. Like Muir, he identified strongly with nature and saw God revealed in her many faces:

"Walking Lee Vining Creek, I have sometimes thought of myself as a stream, newly reborn, just beginning to grow. I can feel the icy water sing

Continued on page 43

The Success Of The Mono Lake Committee

The Mono Lake Committee was organized in 1978 to seek a compromise that would meet the needs of both Mono Lake and Los Angeles. The Committee proposed a "wet year/dry year" plan that would permit Los Angeles to divert almost all of Mono's water in dry years, leaving a small flow to protect wild trout fisheries in the tributary streams. In wet years, when Los Angeles could readily obtain replacement supplies, diversions would cease and the lake would be allowed to rise.

A major step was taken in 1979 when ten state, federal and local agencies developed just such a compromise, recommending that Mono Lake be raised to its 1975 elevation of 6388 feet. But Los Angeles—more specifically the Department of Water & Power—opposed the plan, and the Mono Lake Committee felt they had no choice but to go to court. (MLC doesn't engage in civil disobedience—no sit-ins, no picketing—rather, it litigates.) Since 1979, the Committee's quest to save Mono Lake has gotten them mired in four major lawsuits:

---

1. AUDUBON PUBLIC TRUST SUIT: The Mono Lake Committee charged the L.A. water agency with violating the "public trust doctrine"—an ancient legal doctrine that protects navigable bodies of water for the use and benefit of all people. In a precedent-setting decision in 1983, the California Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the state has an obligation to protect places like Mono Lake "as far as feasible," even if this means reconsidering past water allocation decisions. The high court mandated that a "better balance" be struck between the water needs of Mono Lake and Los Angeles, but did not specify what exactly that meant. Delayed by appeals, the "balancing" issue has yet to come to trial.

2. RUSH CREEK LAWSUIT: Brought by California Trout in 1984 and joined by Mono Lake Committee and National Audubon Society, the suit challenges DWP with violating the public trust doctrine and state Fish and Game laws requiring dam owners to release sufficient water to keep downstream fish "in good condition." In 1985, the court issued a preliminary injunction requiring the release of 19 cubic feet per second down Rush Creek. The trial has been deferred until late 1988 until state-funded studies of the water flow needed to sustain a healthy fishery in Rush Creek are completed.

3. WATER LICENSE SUIT: Jointly brought by MLC, California Trout and National Audubon Society in 1985, the case challenges the legality of Los Angeles' state-granted licenses to divert water from any of Mono Lake's tributary streams. On May 25, 1988, it was announced that the environmental groups had won their appeal. The licenses are to be revoked and reissued. New licenses will require DWP to protect the downstream fisheries, i.e. water in the creeks! The decision by the state Court of Appeal reportedly shocked Los Angeles officials, who said the case will probably be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

4. LEE VINING LAWSUIT: Filed by MLC in 1986, this case is similar to the Rush Creek lawsuit. The Mono County Superior Court issued a preliminary injunction in 1987 requiring Los Angeles to release a combined flow of about 20,000 acre-feet of water a year in two of the four streams that feed Mono Lake while their possible use as fisheries is studied. The trial is pending.

ALPENGLOW

Divine Light of the Sierra

Text and photos by Mike McWherter

"Now came the solemn, silent evening. Long, spiky-edged shadows crept out across the snowfields, while a rosy glow, at first scarcely discernable, gradually deepened and suffused every mountain top, flushing the glaciers and harsh crags above them. This was the Alpenglow, to me one of the most impressive of all terrestrial manifestations of God. . . ."

— John Muir, *The Mountains of California*

The high peaks of the eastern Sierra provide Owens Valley visitors and backcountry users some of the best opportunities to observe the spectacular event known as alpenglow. To see alpenglow in Owens Valley you have to be an early riser because it occurs before sunrise. The weather is a factor too, as clouds in the east can block the sun's early morning rays, hiding the event altogether. On the western side of the Sierra, you will see the Alpenglow in the evening, ideally on the high peaks that catch the lingering rays of the setting sun. Half Dome in Yosemite National Park is a good bet.

Some of the best alpenglow I have observed has occurred on the great east face of Mt. Whitney. This is, of course, the morning variety of alpenglow. My favorite campsite in the Alabama Hills near Lone Pine

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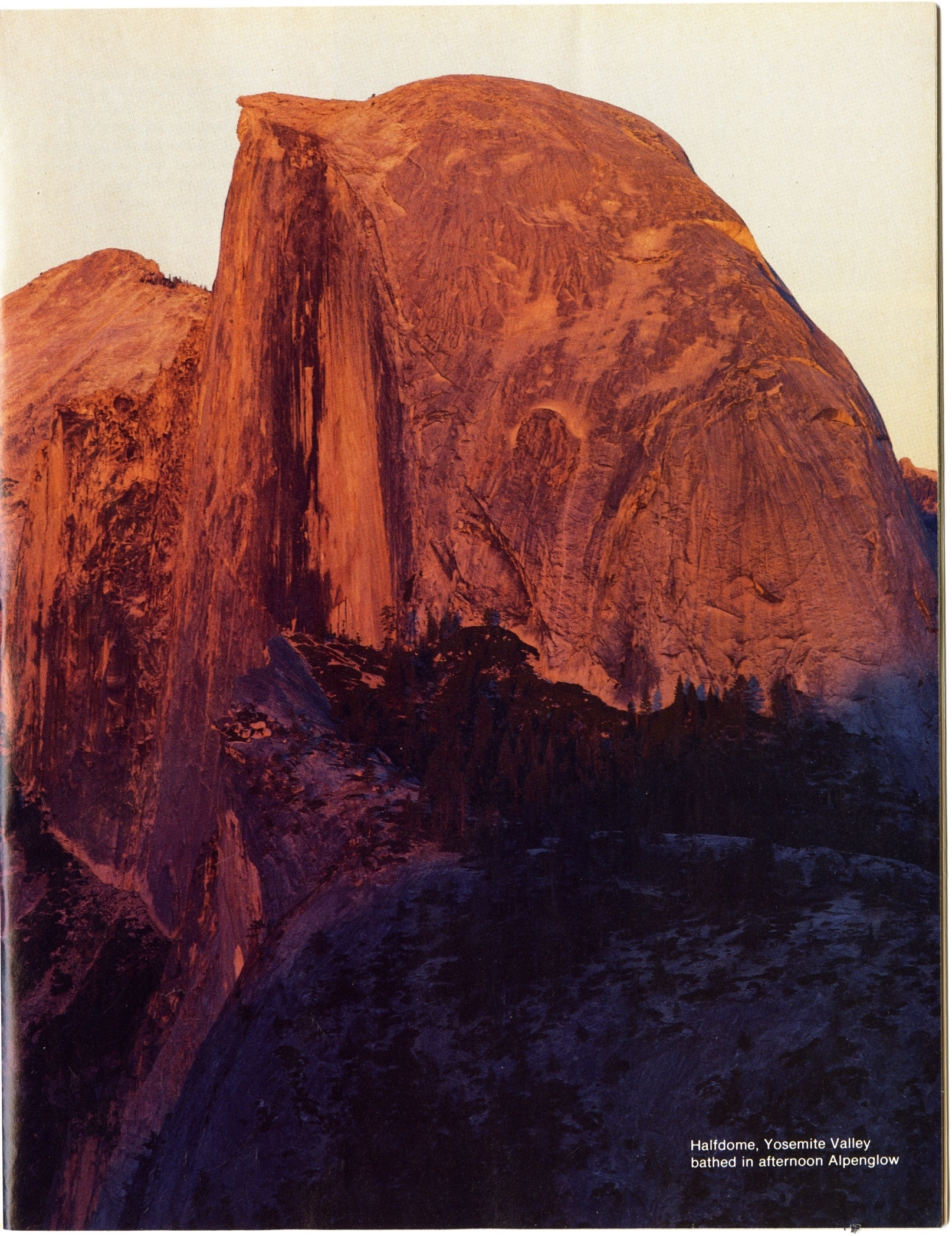
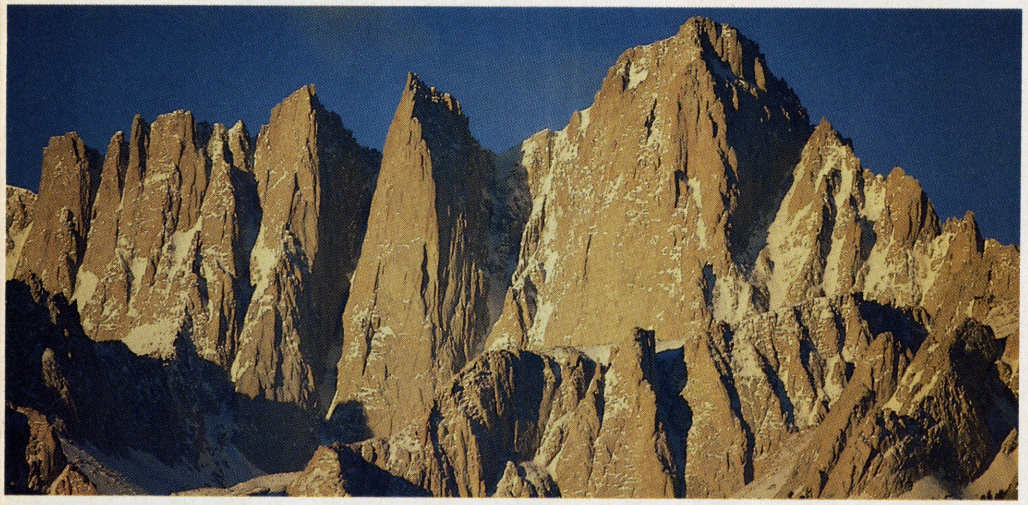
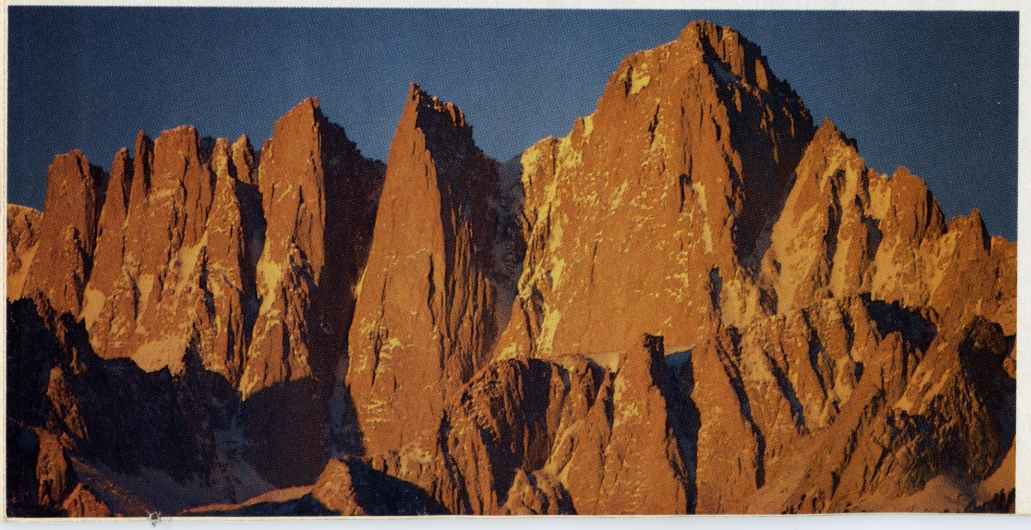


Halfdome, Yosemite Valley
bathed in afternoon Alpenglow





offers great views of Mt. Whitney. I have discovered that winter, with its clear cold mornings, is likely to produce the best alpenglow on Mt. Whitney. One such winter morning I left the warmth of my sleeping bag before sunrise in the hopes of capturing on film this colorful phenomenon.

My camera was mounted on a sturdy tripod as I focused my 500mm on the great east face of Mt. Whitney. The huge granite monolith appeared cold in a purplish light. Then it began to happen. Many thousands of feet above the summit the atmosphere seemed to be charged with a pinkish light which was slowly descending towards the earth, a process called the twilight arch. Within a few minutes the tip of

Sunrise colors on Mt. Whitney follow a red-yellow-violet sequence while sunset on Half Dome (preceding page) follows the opposite sequence.

Mt. Whitney was overtaken by the pinkish light. As the light spread from about 14,000 feet to 12,000 feet, pink intensified to red, and soon the entire east face was ablaze. Red hues slowly changed to orange, and together those deep rich colors lasted five minutes or more. Various shades of yellow followed, faded, giving way to the typical early morning light which lends Mt. Whitney granite its almost white appearance.

I wondered, why do the Mt. Whitney sunrise colors follow a red-orange-yellow sequence, while the sunset alpenglow (say, on Half Dome) follows the opposite color sequence - yellow, orange, red. And what caused the colors in the first place? Armed with questions, I

sought answers, which revealed some interesting laws of nature at work.

At sunset and sunrise, when the sun is low on the horizon, light rays entering the earth's atmosphere are bent, or refracted. The atmosphere, acting as a prism, separates the light into the seven colors of the spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Before dawn, when the sun is still below the horizon, the spectrum is visible high above the surface of the earth, passing over even the highest mountains.

Sunset Alpenglow on Mt. Russell as seen from summit of Mt. Whitney on December 29, 1987.
Photo by Mike McWherter

As the earth rotates, the tops of high mountains are the first to be touched by the light. Because red is the color bent least by the earth's atmosphere, it is the first to strike the mountain tops at sunrise. As the earth continues to rotate, the mountains move further into the spectrum, catching the next colors, orange, and then yellow. At sunset the color sequence is reversed because now the mountains are passing out of the spectrum instead of into it.

As for the other end of the spectrum, it seems that blue, indigo, and violet are scattered — diffused — into the upper atmosphere, while green is only seen, if you are very quick, as a momentary "flash," or burst of a green light. The earth's atmosphere tends to scatter higher frequency light (blue through violet) much more than lower frequency light (green through red). This scattering is caused by dust particles, water vapor, as well as the various gases which make up air. A man named Lord Raleigh, who studied such things, formulated a mathematical expression describing this effect which he called "Raleigh Scattering." He concluded that violet is scattered sixteen times more than red. Thus violet would be the color scattered most in the upper atmosphere, followed by indigo and blue. This

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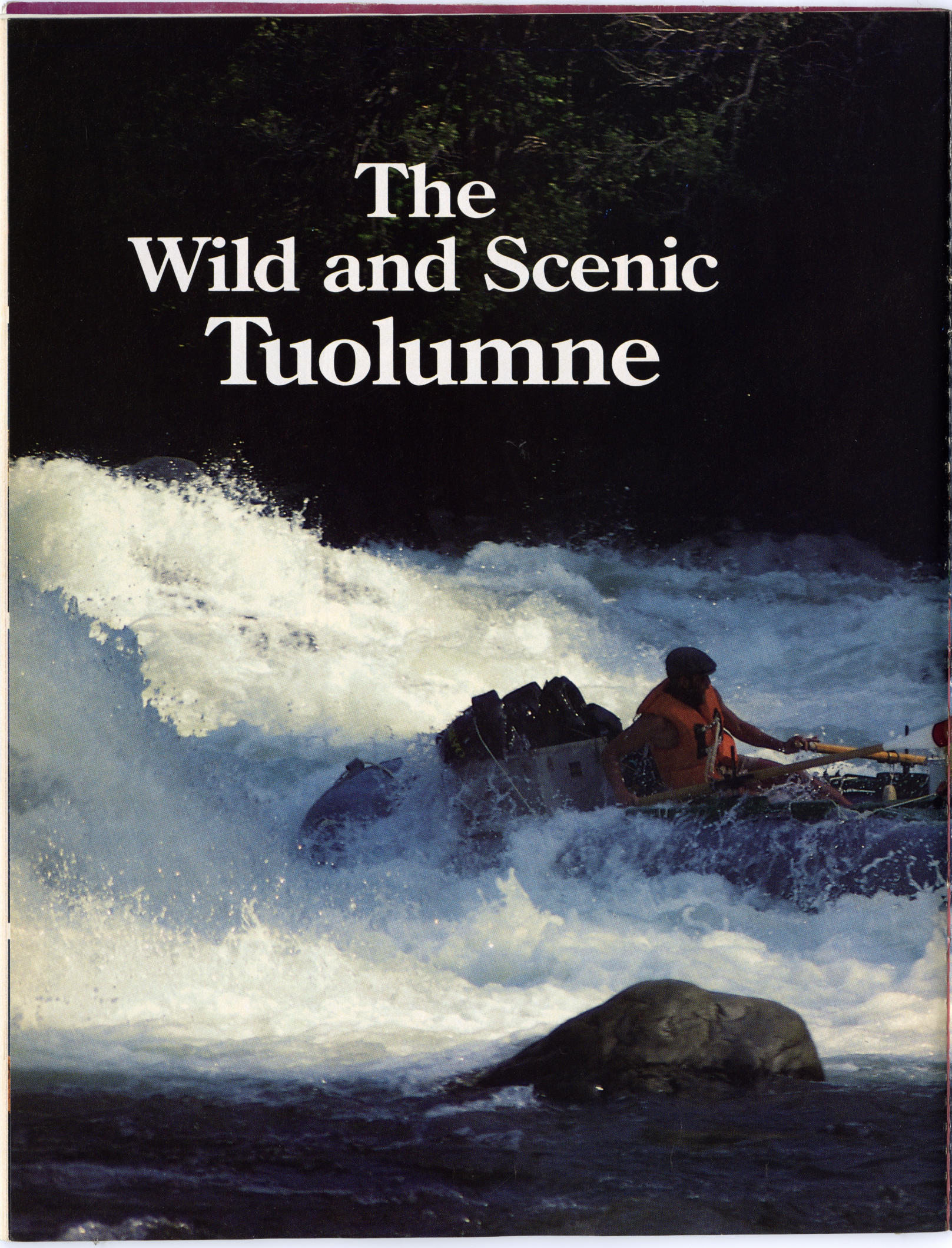
The Wild and Scenic Tuolumne



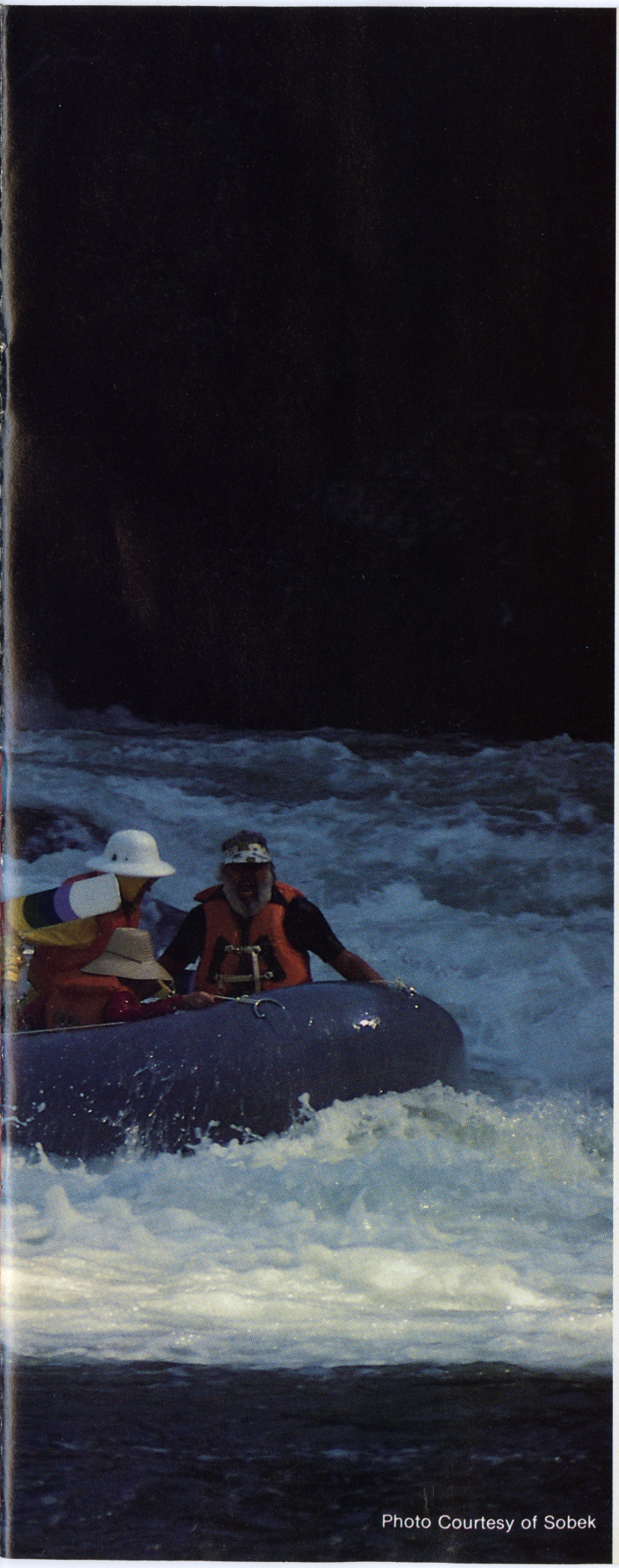


Photo Courtesy of Sobek

by Christian Kallen

"There's nothing like a little controversy to open your eyes," said the young Central Valley assemblyman. "If it wasn't for all the legislative fighting over this river, I'd never have heard of it." He and his wife were on a week-end vacation from the tension and pace of his job as a member of California's legislature. A few hours earlier, at the Lumsden Campground where the Tuolumne River trip began, he had appeared stiff and critical, still bearing his official demeanor. Now, baptised by the chilly waters of Rock Garden, Nemesis, Sunderland, and Ram's Head, he looked with fresh vision at the tawny walls of Jawbone Ridge overhead. "This is a *beautiful* place!".

We were running the Tuolumne with Friends of the River, an 8,000-member organization of river runners and wild water advocates, in an informal lobbying effort to collect support for the ultimately successful naming of the "T" to the nation's Wild and Scenic River System. The legislator was another of F.O.R.'s "guests", all of whom had been potentially influential in the fight to save California's rivers. It was a technique which F.O.R. had developed on the Stanislaus, and turned into an art on the Tuolumne. You never knew who you were going to see on the river, from Pete Wilson to Charlton Heston to Bob Weir.

The Wild and Scenic River System was designed to provide the same kind of federal protection for the nation's rivers as its parklands have long enjoyed. A Wild and Scenic River is protected from dams, diversion projects, or riverside developments which would alter its character. For river runners, as well as for fly fishermen, family campers and others who think that rivers should be allowed to flow free, "Wild and Scenic" status is akin to a Good Housekeeping seal of approval, the government's guarantee of permanence.

Of course, the Tuolumne began its life without the necessity of federal or state designation. It had long been as wild as a river could be, plunging through the canyons

created by the longest glacier in the Sierra Nevada. Today, the Tuolumne is both at its most natural and its most abused within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park, where its course begins.

Beyond the blue bowl of Lake Tenaya at the foot of Tresidder Peak, Highway 120 rises to 9,000 feet, reaching the broad green expanse known as Tuolumne Meadows, surrounded by the granite heart of the Sierra. Here, wildflowers hide in the thickets; tiny trickling creeks meander across the meadow in a subtle network; grasses undulate in the breezes, changing their hue with every wave of the wind.

The waters of almost a dozen tributaries draining the canyons of the Sierra crest coalesce at the base of Pothole Rock, uniting their waters into a single channel. The resulting river is immediately compressed between the walls of a narrow U-shaped canyon, down which the Tuolumne Glacier forced its way during the Wisconsonian Ice Age, 12,000 years ago. From the top of Pothole, you can hear two incompatible sounds, each very different in origin yet, from high above, oddly similar. There is the petroleum-powered rumble and hiss of automobiles along the Tioga Pass Highway to the south, and the hydraulic roar of the Tuolumne River to the north, as it enters the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne.

"The resulting river is immediately compressed between the walls of a narrow U-shaped canyon, down which the Tuolumne Glacier forced its way during the Wisconsonian Ice Age, 12,000 years ago."

Down the canyon, just out of sight, the Tuolumne's waters have been tamed for nearly three-quarters of a century. Behind the formidable walls of O'Shaughnessy Dam lies Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, the water supply for the city of San Francisco.

Photo courtesy of sobek

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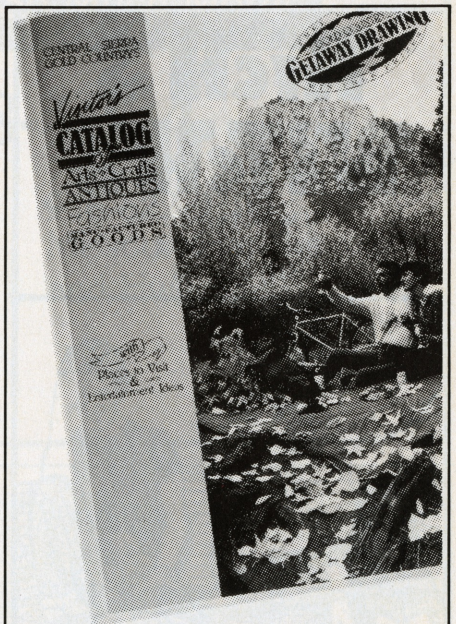

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Today, there's a movement underway to dismantle the O'Shaughnessy Dam, sparked by a seemingly off-the-cuff comment by Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. Some applaud the idea; others fear the movement is actually a diversionary tactic to allow the damming of the American River behind the long-planned Auburn Dam. Such conflicts seem to be the hallmark of life in the American West. Building up means tearing down, damming, altering the face of the landscape; progress seems to mean irrevocable change. Whatever the large-scale politics and causes of the development of the West, the battles are usually fought on the local level — the new shopping mall on the edge of town, the nuclear power plant upwind from the college campus, the hydroelectric dam on the wild river.

"History doesn't repeat itself," that Gold Rush philosopher Mark Twain, once wrote. "But it does rhyme." After the 1913 damming of the Tuolumne in Hetch Hetchy, other environmental battles wounded scores of rivers in the West, notches on a sharpshooter's gun: the depths of Hells Canyon were drowned on the Snake in Idaho, Glen Canyon's secret places were lost beneath Lake Powell, and even the Grand Canyon was threatened by the damming of the Colorado. With the dawning of the 1970s, the big fight was shifted to the Tuolumne's sister river to the north, the Stanislaus.

When I headed out to the Sierra to raft the Stanislaus River in 1977, I expected another kind of water scene, a boogie-hungry crowd with portable radios and sun lotion. What I found was not the beach, but the river — with its tranquility, natural beauty and an unexpected wildness that was far from the California of coastal towns and freeway-laced cities. The rapids of the upper five miles were as exciting as anything I'd experienced, and with names like Widow Maker, Devil's Staircase, and Death Rock, I was sure I was at the very farthest reaches of hydraulic excitement. But it was the towering limestone walls of the canyon that lent the Stanislaus its unique status, both scenic and historic, among recreational rivers.

"Miwok Indians found that the caves provided perfect shelter during their summer camps along the river; Gold Rush Bandits such as Joaquin Murrieta hid in them; eventually, it was recreational cavers who discovered the Stanislaus Canyon in the 1960's."

The caves were carved in the limestone by the percolating effect of drainage. Miwok Indians found that the caves provided perfect shelter during their summer camps along the river; Gold Rush bandits such as Joaquin Murrieta hid in them; eventually, it was recreational cavers who discovered the Stanislaus canyon in the 1960s. Soon afterward, the river was rediscovered by kayakers and rafters, who found in the steep-walled canyon of rare beauty a series of thrilling Class III and IV rapids — as well as foundations of the dam that would eventually drown the Stanislaus.

The New Melones Dam was first authorized by the federal government in 1944. Designed to replace a much smaller flood-control dam at the same site, it was but one element in the ambitious Central Valley Project. Its projected price tag was a modest $6.1 million. Despite the legislative battles, ballot initiatives, letter-writing campaigns and articles

in the press — and the dramatic act of Mark Dubois, who chained himself to a rock to prevent the filling of the reservoir — New Melones was filled over the winter of 1982. Total price tag: $341 million, 58 times the original budgeted cost. The dam is the country's sixth highest, and second highest earthfill dam (behind the Oroville Dam on the Feather River), an enormous plug 625 feet high and 1,560 feet across, at the gate of Iron Canyon. Needless to say, the wild waters of the Stanislaus, and the ancient caves with their Indian relics, were drowned.

Out of the struggle to save the Stanislaus grew Friends of the River, the populist lobbying organization of river runners and conservationists who think that some rivers should retain their natural character. F.O.R. realized the battle may have been lost, but there was a war raging: they looked around at other rivers to salvage, and found on the nearby Tuolumne the same kinds of threats that had drowned the Stanislaus: dams, diversion projects, and an uninformed public.

The major threat to the 28-mile stretch of the Tuolumne where recreational river running takes place was a project by the combined Turlock and Modesto Water Districts, long smarting over having to buy their power and water from San Francisco (which purchased the Tuolumne's resources at the turn of the century). Their plans were to create a diversion dam, penstock, and power generating station network running 50 miles overland from Cherry Creek — just 10 miles outside of Yosemite — down to Clavey Creek. It was, as river projects go, a fairly modest one. No huge plug would fill the canyon beneath Jawbone Ridge with an amorphous immensity of backfill. But the plan would drain the Tuolumne of most of its water, leaving only 10% of its annual flow, and make a mockery of the river's attributes as a recreational resource.

Friends of the River took an active role in pushing for Tuolumne protection, as did the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust, an alliance of F.O.R.,

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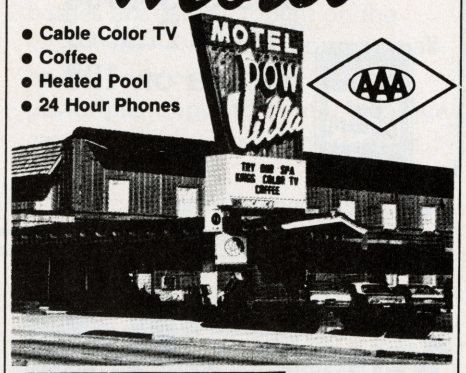

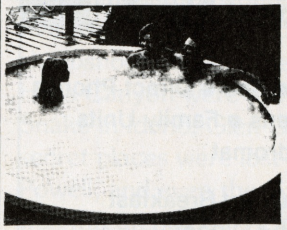

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commercial and private rafters, and other groups. They were quick to enlist the support of the City of Berkeley, which has long operated a "family camp" on the Tuolumne River above the Lumsden campground (where most commercial trips begin). Fishermen, too, were courted, for according to the state Department of Fish and Game, the main fork's waters support 1,000 pounds of fish per acre, primarily brown and rainbow trout.

This was part of F.O.R.'s strategy for the Tuolumne: enlist a broad base of support, far beyond just the ragged (if rugged) river rafting contingent. Their message was that the Tuolumne was a national resource, with a range of uses — exactly the kind of criteria decision-makers in Washington demanded for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System. A strong and lengthy campaign was waged, central to which was F.O.R.'s strategy of taking influential people

"Although the Tuolumne became wild and scenic in 1984, it was only over the winter of 1986/87 that the final management plan was approved."

— legislators, congressional aides, public figures — down the river. After years of effort, it finally paid off: in September of 1984, President Reagan affixed his signature to the California Omnibus Wilderness Bill, which named the Tuolumne to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

There are several categories of Wild and Scenic rivers. A "wild" designation, which forbids all motorized river travel, is the most restrictive. The "scenic" category allows road access, but strives to maintain a near-natural environment. A "recreational" designation allows for parking lots, trailheads, boat launches and raft takeouts, as well as other small development.

Although the Tuolumne became Wild and Scenic in 1984, it was only over the winter of 1986/87 that the final management plan was approved. The bulk of the river's raftable stretches, 24 miles both in

its Lumsden to Ward's Ferry Class IV run (the more popular) and the difficult Cherry Creek to Lumsden Class V section, are designated (accurately) as "wild." The four-mile area around Lumsden bridge, with its access points and campgrounds, is "scenic"; while the mile around the Early Intake hydraulic site has been named "recreational" in order to recognize its existing developments and allow for more (as long as they are consistent with the river's protected qualities).

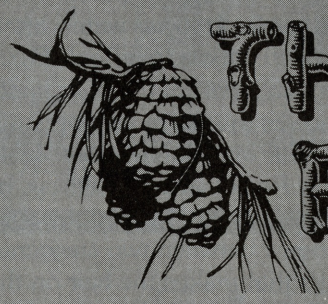
Put-in on the Tuolumne is at the end of the steep, narrow Lumsden Road. The first time you ride in the back of a truck going down into the canyon, dodging sweepers of poison oak and instinctively leaning away from the vertical walls that slide by the right side of the truck, you're convinced that the road has got to be more dangerous than the river. Then you look down and see the rapids, white chutes of turmoil fun-

"But you've got to keep your wits about you - your hands on the wheel (or oars) and your mind on the road (or river)."

neled between boulders and steep walls, and you think you might have been wrong.

That might explain the tension in the air at Meral's Pool, the quiet eddy just downstream from the Lumsden campground. It's not that the river is dangerous, exactly — no more so than the freeway. But you've got to keep your wits about you — your hands on the wheel (or oars) and your mind on the road (or river). If the passengers are late coming down the road, boatmen invariably cast off and row upstream to the base of the small rapid above Meral's Pool, "warming up" or maybe just burning off nervous energy. But there comes the point when everyone's there, everything's ready, and there's no place to go but down river.

The rapids come fast and furious in the first four miles; the water drops about 80 feet per mile, more than ten times the drop in the Grand



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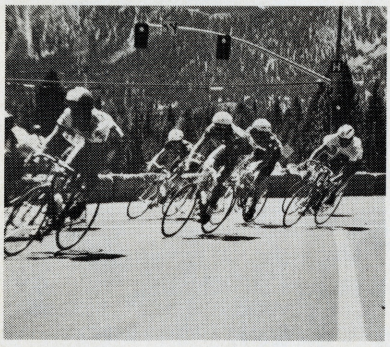

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Canyon. The first rapid is Rock Garden, a maze of boulders which gets harder at lower water; after mid-July, getting stuck in Rock Garden is as much a part of the river experience as the warm summer sun and the clear unpolluted water. Just below Rock Garden, Nemesis rears its head, with its "helicopter turn" entrance between two staggered rocks that makes the hair on the back of a boatman's neck bristle. Then Sunderland's Chute, a steep drop between boat-tearing holes, Hackamack's Hole, and Laura; finally, the accelerating current reaches Ram's Head, where the river careens around a blind corner, confronting a jumble of rocks along the right bank.

"Every great river has its Waterloo, so to speak: the Colorado has lava, the Snake has granite falls. For the Tuolumne, it's Clavey."

After eight nerve-wrenching rapids in the first three miles, the Tuolumne eases up a bit, gliding through a deep canyon replete with digger pine and blue oak, the bright pastels of pink redbud and green buckeye glowing in the springtime. But the respite is short-lived. Every great river has its Waterloo, so to speak: the Colorado has Lava, the Snake has Granite Falls. For the Tuolumne, it's Clavey. At Mile Six, the 60-mile long Clavey River tributary comes spilling around a corner of polished and folded chert, bringing with it in flood stage a cargo of boulders.

These rocks have been washed into the Tuolumne over the centuries, building up a rocky rim over which the river leaps 15 feet down a 40-degree chute into a pool. The current, fast and furious after the drop, exercises its vengeance by propelling any craft arrogant enough to get this far directly toward a barely-submerged boulder lying eight feet from the sheer left wall. This is Clavey Hole, a hungry monster with catholic tastes that seems to reach out and sample every boat that goes by. To ride the falls is relatively straightforward; missing the hole is another matter.

Past Clavey Falls, a veil seems to lift. The most dangerous rapid on the river is behind now, but there are still 11 miles of this 18-mile run to the take-out at Ward's Ferry, then a mile into the flat water trapped behind the New Don Pedro Dam. There are rapids aplenty on this stretch, many of them risky: Grey's Grindstone, a half-mile long labyrinth of split currents, blind approaches and mid-stream boulders; Thread-the-Needle, a choice between narrow chutes and narrower chutes; Cabin and Hell's Kitchen, a twin set of fast approaches to oppressively tight boulder drops.

But there's also plenty of opportunity to relax and explore: wide sandy beaches on which to camp beneath the clear summer skies; abandoned mines and even a decommissioned power house from the turn of the century; and broad walls of polished chert and limestone. These rocks are the Paleozoic underpinnings of the Siera, and they have been twisted and fluted by time and river into elaborate shapes. A golden eagle soars overhead; dippers chirp and swoop over the river, finding a rock in mid-rapid from which to peruse the passing boats. A group of kayakers slice through the waves, making seemingly impossible maneuvers with effortless strokes and shifts of weight.

Ten miles downstream from Clavey Falls, the North Fork of the Tuo-

lumne enters the main stem from the right. It's a favorite place to tie up the boats and take a hike, to seek out the last treasure of a weekend on the Tuolumne. Following the creek along its rocky course, fording from one side to another, ducking under the low branches of streamside trees, you finally come to the trail's end: a pile of shoes, caps and shirts next to a pool beneath a sheer wall.

You have to wade into the pool and swim around the wall to discover the special pleasures of the North Fork. Ten feet from the end of the trail, a new world opens up: a jumble of granite boulders, polished by ancient ice, through which percolates a crystal-clear stream. The cliffs on either side rise to 30 feet, from which the brave leap joyously into a swimming hole. At the far end of the diving pool, the stream tumbles down a five-foot falls, perfect for sliding or just enjoying the serenade of rushing water.

The assemblyman had become increasingly relaxed as the trip progressed. He had dug into the first night's dinner with a hearty appetite, waved a brave V-sign at the lip of Clavey Falls, and had even begun to banter and joke with the crew. The awkwardness he had displayed whenever someone spoke about something other than politics had all but evaporated; he was beginning to resemble a normal guy, which was clearly a barely remembered role for him.

While I lay back on a rock near the first pool, looking up at the digger pines swaying amidst the oaks that climbed the hillside, the assemblyman disappeared up the creek. He was gone for at least an hour, and I dispassionately wondered how he was reacting to the clothes-optional scene up there.

Finally he came back, wearing a rakish grin, his face flushed with health and happiness. "This sort of thing could ruin a guy for life!" he said enthusiastically. Then we began the hike back to the main fork, where our boats waited to continue down the Wild and Scenic Tuolumne.

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MULE DEER

Sad-eyed creatures of the Sierra

By Melissa Yank
Edited by Steve Boga

The Mule Deer, or "Muley" as the hunters call the species, evolved from a primitive animal that came from Asia to the New World at a time when the two continents were united, probably well over a million years ago. The ancestral deer spread throughout the continent, diversifying into several different species, the largest of which was the mule deer, Odocoileus hemionus.

The mule deer favors the rugged mountains of the West, so if you've been camping in the Sierra and had a deer wander into your camp, chances are good it was Odocoileus hemionus californicus, affectionately known as the California Mule Deer. Black-tipped tail, pointed snout, cute little button nose, Bambi eyes and, of course, the feature that provided its name: unusually large ears, sometimes as much as 42 surface inches of ear. Such extraordinary ears serve two purposes: First, as thermoregulators, keeping the deer cool in the summer with a thin coat of hair, and warm in the winter with a fuller growth of hair. Second, as sonar dishes, allowing the deer to hear danger before it arrives.

Photos by Mike McWherter

When fleeing danger, a mule deer might strategically employ any of four different types of gait: walk, trot, gallop and bound. Because they prefer to sneak away from danger rather than expose themselves to it by running, deer are known to some as "skulkers." A mule deer won't run from danger if it can walk, and won't even walk if it knows it can go undetected by staying absolutely still. This accounts for why so few deer are seen even when their numbers are reportedly high. Maybe as many as ten deer see a hunter for every one deer he sees.

Mule deer have chameleon-like coats. Dark-grey in winter, more reddish in summer, their color tends to fade in the sun and blend in with their surroundings. Masters of camouflage, they are adept at finding a small patch of brush, a shady spot beneath a ledge, or a shallow trench where they can lie below ground level. In one case, three does successfully concealed themselves in a cut alfalfa field that was no more than nine inches deep. Lying flat with their chins on the ground and ears pressed tightly to their heads, they resembled little mounds of dirt.

On the other hand, if mule deer sense too high a danger level, they take off "bounding," a unique form of locomotion in which the deer strike down hard with all four legs simultaneously. It looks awkward, but is actually quite an effective mode of travel. It enables the deer to vault rocks and brush, and to quickly gain or lose altitude on moutainous terrain. It also helps them evade bullets. On level ground, mule deer have been known to bound 19.5 feet. On a seven-degree down slope, someone recorded a mule deer bounding 28 feet, 7 inches.

If bounding is a useful survival trait, the mule deer has another habit that seems almost suicidal. It is addicted to the habit of stopping in mid-retreat for one last look, thereby revealing itself to the very danger is seeks to avoid. This tendency has caused people to brand the mule deer as stupid. In reality, the animal is probably stopping to allow its acute senses of smell and hearing to work.

Continued on page 32

The large ears of the Mule Deer act as thermoregulators and sonar dishes!

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MULE DEER from page 30

Mule deer eat a wide variety of foods and seldom go hungry during the spring and summer months. Their diet is primarily the leaves and twigs of deerbush, elderberry, manzanita, thimbleberry, bittercherry, gooseberry, currant, aspen, willow and oak. Some tender grass is eaten in the spring; in the fall they eat acorns. In the winter, when snow covers the middle and high elevations, they move to the snow-free lowlands where their diet is dominated by the foliage of evergreens.

Fall is a busy time for deer. They are eating a lot to prepare for the lean times ahead. It is also mating time. In October or November, each buck tries to round up one or more does, as a kind of harem, with whom he will then mate. Fights between competing bucks, while common, are more bluster than bloodshed. There have been times, however, when the antlers of two bucks have become locked and they have been unable to free themselves. When this happens, they either die of starvation or are killed by some predator.

By December, the mating season is over and the deer have moved into the area they will occupy for the rest of the winter. By late winter the bucks have shed their antlers.

The antlers develop from a pair of short, bony columns called pedicles which are part of the frontal bone of the skull located above and behind the eye sockets. Antlers are first grown when the males are a year old. The more lime in the food and water, the bigger the rack. It is, of course, the mule deer's tendency to grow tremendous antlers that makes it such an attractive trophy animal to hunters.

In late spring the mule deer move back to the higher elevations as the snow melts. By late June or early July, they have reached their summer range. Now each doe must select a place to bear her young. Usually she will give birth to two fawns, although she may have one or three. Fawns grow rapidly: their birth weight doubles in 15 days, and that doubles again in another two weeks. Their weight increases tenfold in six months. Before this time, they are about two-thirds the size of their mother, whom they continue to follow for her rich milk.

While older deer store fat to carry them over the long winter, fawns are able to build up much less reserve. Consequently, a quarter to half of the fawns will not survive their first winter. Death is usually not by starvation but by malnutrition. That is, they can fill their stomachs, but with poor-quality feed.

The full-grown mule deer is, on the average, the largest American deer. A very large buck has a shoulder height in excess of 44 inches. The heaviest "muley" ever was recorded in the Rockies in 1930 and weighed around 400 pounds. Average weight for a male deer in the Sierra: about 145 pounds. And they are fast. Mule deer can run 20 miles per hour for a considerable distance. And in one instance, a Modoc County man tested their speed by herding them with his car, clocking them at 38 mph for a short distance.

Several animals prey on deer, including the cougar, or mountain lion, who is effective in weeding out old and diseased animals. Coyotes and bobcats also kill deer, especially when they come upon one caught in deep snow. Bears will occasionally find and kill a fawn. But by far, the most effective killer of deer is Man. Both on the road, with his car, and in the wilderness, with his gun, he presents the clearest and most present danger to deer.

The outlook for the mule deer is a source of constant debate between hunters and environmentalists. Despite their cunning, their speed, they make first-rate targets for hunters and their numbers are declining in many regions (though not, of course, in national parks where they are protected). This is partly due to the expansion of the whitetail's domain and partly due to the expansion of Man's domain. If it is to survive, the mule deer must have access to food, shelter and secure places to breed.

When you put it that way, odocoileus hemionus doesn't seem so different from homo sapien.

A Trout's-eye view of dinner

by Melissa Yank

The hatchery trout raised in a concrete pool, is dumped into a stream shortly before the start of trout season. Completely unfamiliar with natural food sources available to the wild trout, it rushes around, wasting valuable energy chasing inedible items or fighting with other trout. A Velveeta chunk on a hook may seem more appealing than an insect — making the exhausted and famished fish easy prey. Most hatchery trout are dead — either caught or starved — within a month of being released.

The wild trout, by contrast, is a model of feeding efficiency. Robert A. Bachman of Pennsylvania State University conducted a 3,000-hour 1984 field study of the brown trout. Eighty-six percent of the wild trout's time, he found, is spent facing upstream in a sheltered location where the minimal current allows it to survey items floating by. Upon spying an insect, the trout rises to the surface, inspects it closely, then gulps it down before returning to the same spot below. The cautious feeder will wait until many insects have drifted by before making its move. After a success, the attack rate increases.

If the trout is this discerning, how can the fly-fisherman trick a wild trout into a fatal error? As a wild trout may feed up to 290 times per hour, the real question is probably why they don't make *more* mistakes. The trout may be particularly hungry, or its excellent eyesight may blur for some reason.

For the angler, the most relevant may be the fact that individual behavioral differences exist within any population. This can explain not only why some trout are caught, as well as why others *aren't*. It helps confirm the rumor of the "super fish," the lunker under the bridge that challenges local anglers, but never the bait. His day may come.

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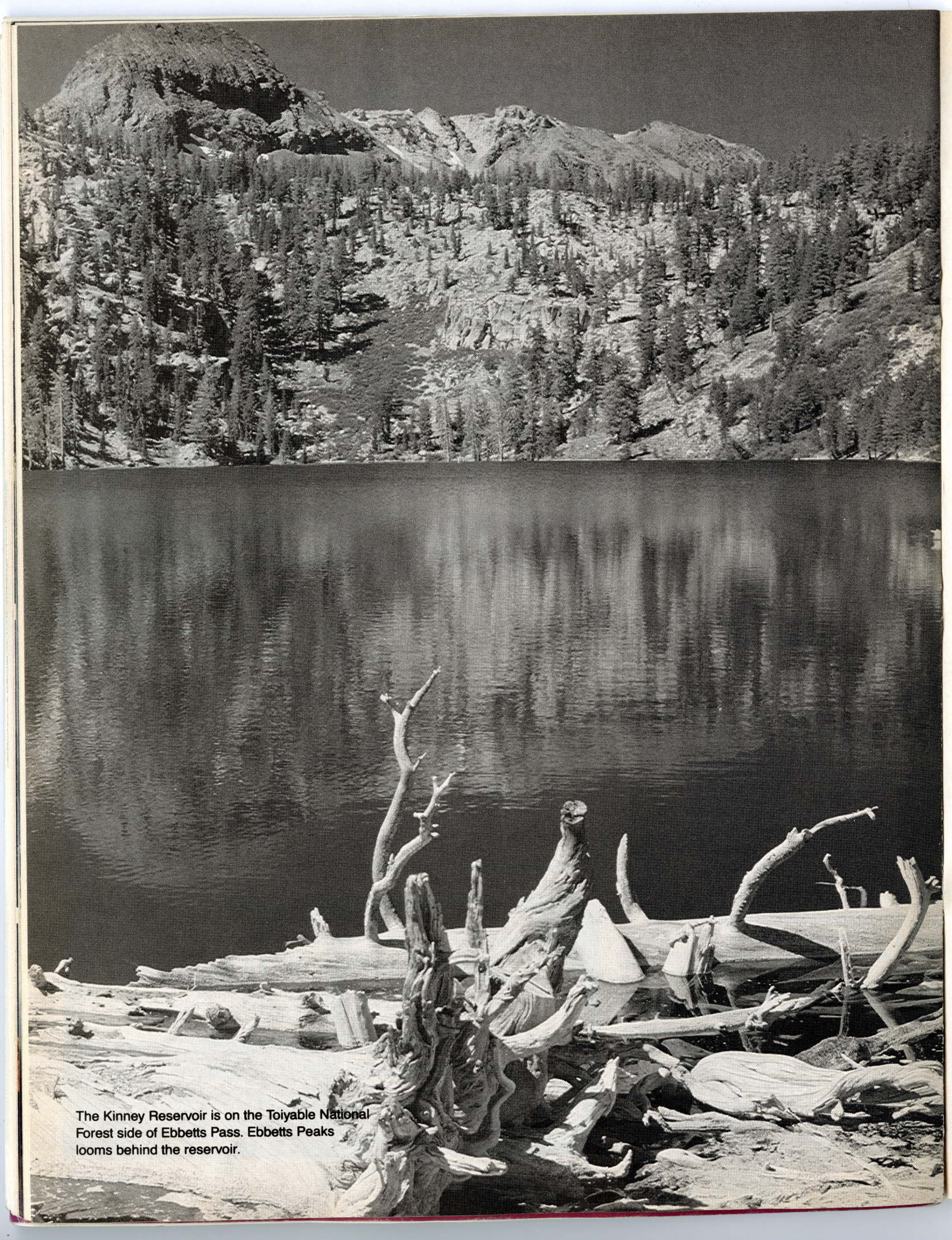


The Kinney Reservoir is on the Toiyable National Forest side of Ebbetts Pass. Ebbetts Peaks looms behind the reservoir.

Ebbetts Pass

From the goldmining towns of Calaveras to the silver mines of Alpine County, Ebbetts Pass offers scenic wonders and sites of historic interest.

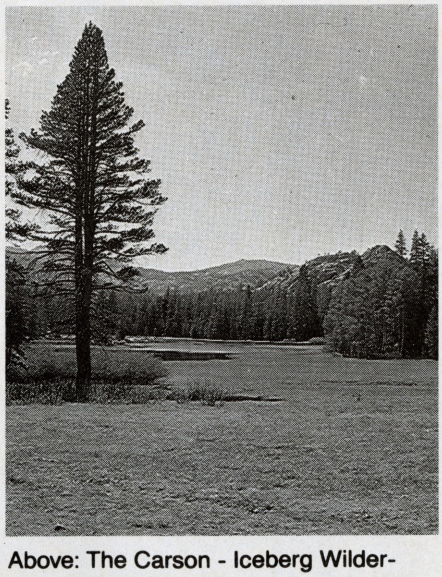
TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROBERT ROBINSON

In May of 1827, mountain man Jedediah Smith, having become the first American to make the transcontinental journey to California, recrossed the Sierra heading east at what is now Ebbetts Pass. Twenty years later, gold enticed hordes of fortune-seekers over the mountains. The leader of one large group of prospectors was Major John Ebbetts, who crossed the pass that now bears his name in April 1850. The major was impressed by the fact that Ebbetts Pass had little snow on it, even though the mountains to either side were covered.

In the summer of 1853, Ebbetts surveyed all possible routes near the headwaters of the Stanislaus River for a trans-Sierra railroad. He published his findings in a San Francisco newspaper and declared that "Ebbett's Pass, between the Carson and Mokelumne River drainages, would be a good route for the rail line." His enthusiasm failed to convince the company, however, and no tracks were ever laid over the pass.

Eventually, though, Calaveras County built a road over the pass from the gold mining towns of Calaveras to the silver mines of Alpine County. This road, after some rerouting, became State Highway 4, the Ebbetts Pass Highway of today.

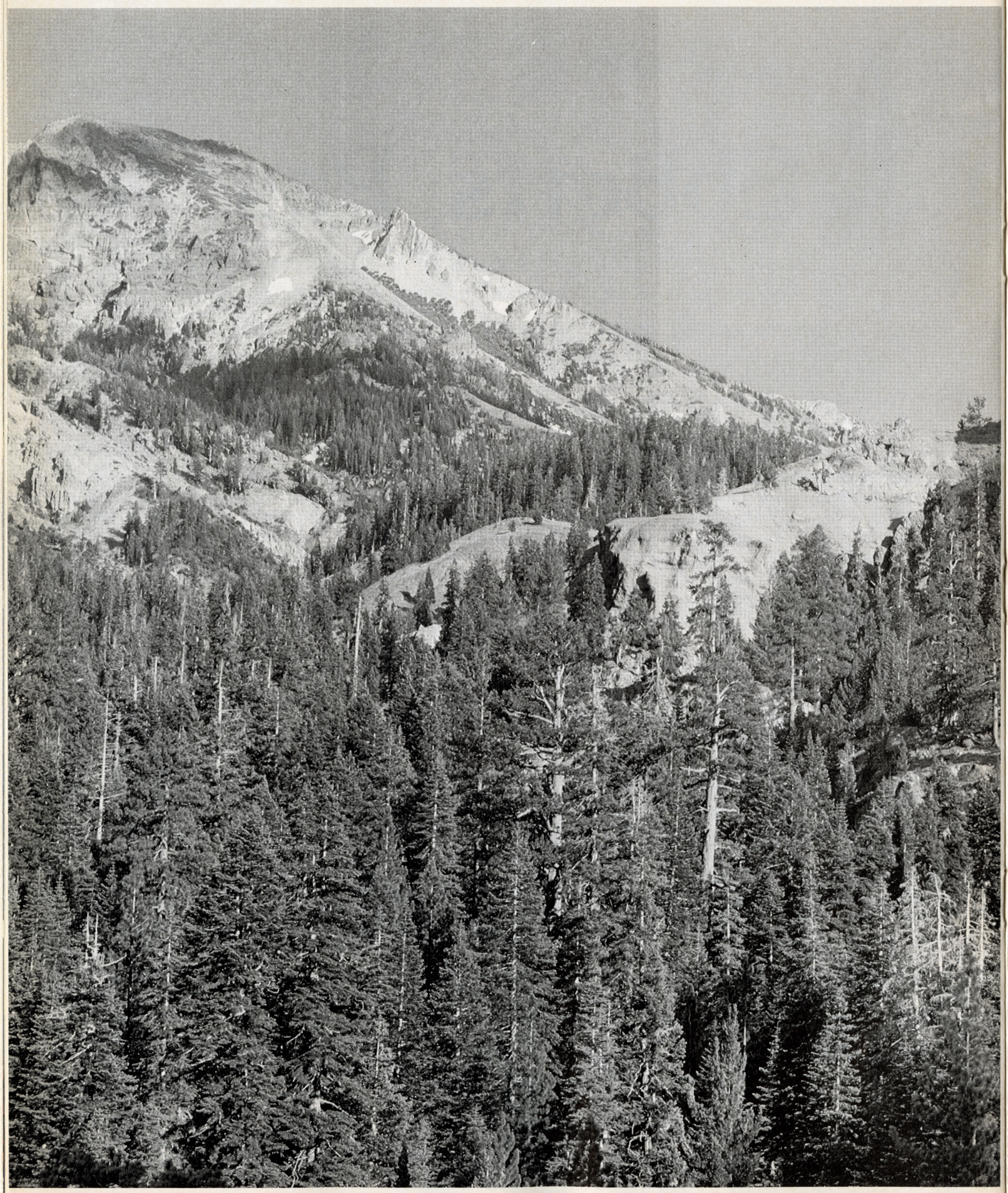
If you take Highway 89 west to Highway 4, you eventually reach the Ebbetts Pass area. Heading north, you'll pass the gates that keep the Ebbetts Pass Highway closed through the winter. In a few miles this relatively uncrowded road takes on its high country character. In the words of a friend of mine, "It used to be a deer trail until they narrowed it."



Above: The Carson - Iceberg Wilderness. Left: Ebbetts Pass looms above the Kinney Reservoir.

From the gates, the road continues to follow the East Fork of the Carson River, until it reaches the historic site of Centerville. Near here, about 2½ miles south of the Highway 4-89 intersection, you can turn left to Wolf Creek Road. After traveling 3½ miles you come to a fork. Heading straight for about 1½ miles, you reach undeveloped campsites and the trailhead for the Wolf Creek Trail. It heads south, with firs, sagebrush, junipers, mountain mahogany, mule ears, and other plants decorating the area. You can drive to the north end of Wolf Creek Meadows by taking the left fork. Then, in 1000 yards, you'll reach a spur road that climbs to trailheads for the High Trail and the East Carson River Trail. Both of these trails lead into one of the newest wilderness areas—the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness—created by the California Wilderness Act in September 1984. The East Carson River Canyon, through which the High and East Carson River Trails pass, was caused by glaciers up to 19 miles long. Consequently, it is one of the longest and deepest canyons east of the Sierra crest.

Continue along Highway 4 next to Silver Creek and you'll reach another historic site—Silver Mountain City. This town, at 7000 feet elevation, was a famous silver mining town from 1860 to 1880. It was once called Kongsberg by Norwegian prospectors, after a silver mining town in Norway. It was also the county seat of Alpine County, until



On the east side of Ebbetts Pass, a trail leads into Nobel Canyon and the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness.

1875 when Markleeville took over from the waning town. Today little remains of Kongsberg, where 3500 people once lived (more than the present county population).

Climbing up the valley, you cross a bridge over Raymond Creek. Stop and gasp at the sight of Raymond Creek Falls upstream. Just past a sharp bend up ahead, two campgrounds of the Toiyabe National Forest are spread out on both sides of the road. By turning right, you can get a campsite that offers a commanding view of the Silver Creek Valley and access to the falls. The campground on the other side has a trailhead that takes you through Nobel Canyon. Farther along the highway, on a sharp bend called "Cadillac Corner"—after a still-visible car that missed this curve and plunged into the canyon—there is a parking area that serves the trailhead to Nobel Canyon. A short distance along this trail, you reach a recently created beaver pond with logs scattered throughout the water.

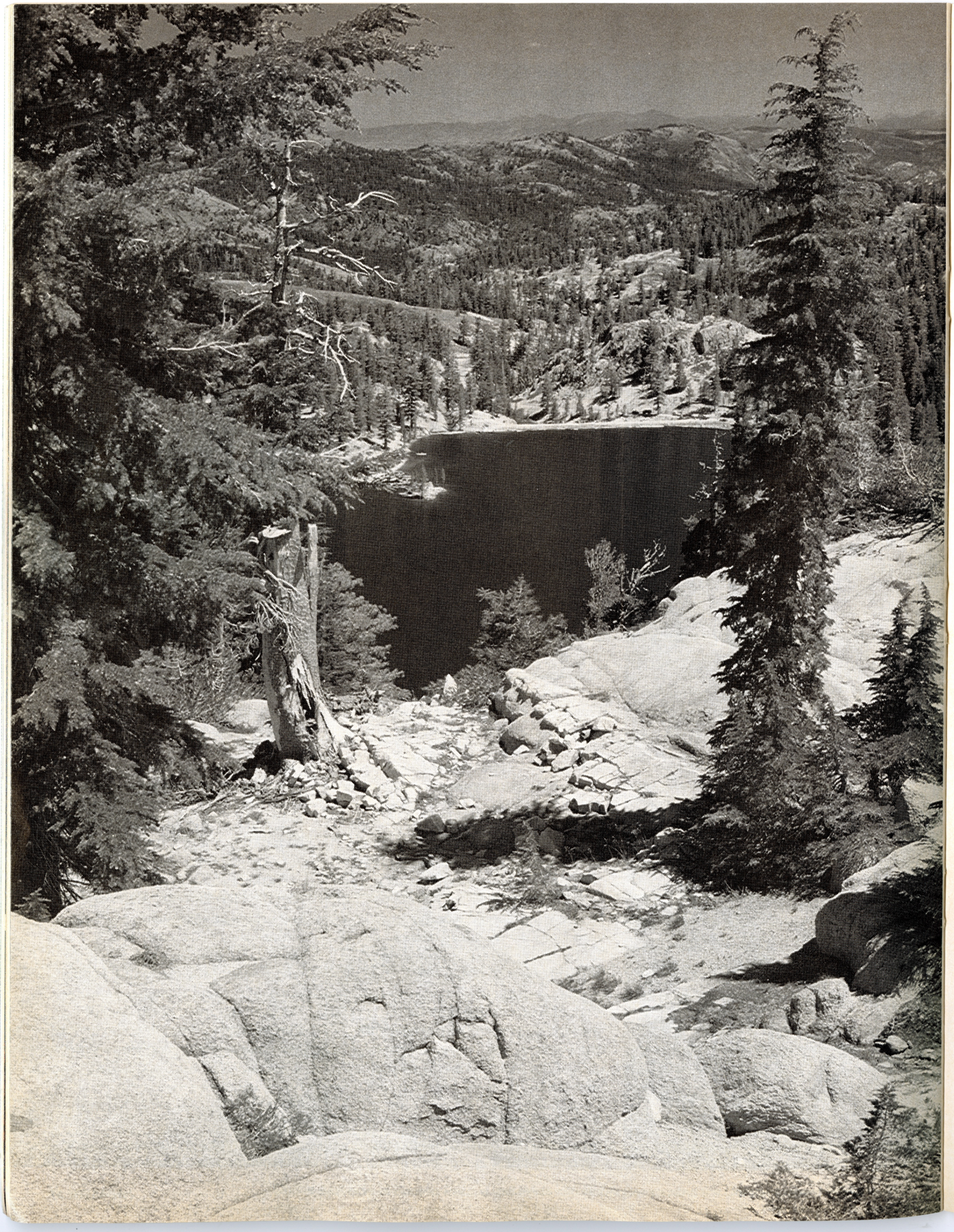
As it snakes its way up past aspen groves, the highway passes several primitive, mostly roadside campsites. These are little more than dirt driveways leading to rocky fire circles. In fact, much of the high country on either side of Ebbetts Pass provides primitive roadside sites for the taking. One of my all-time favorite campsites is in this Silver Creek area. It is next to a small creek, surrounded by aspens and willows; from the top of a nearby hill, you can get a broad view of the valley. The sound of rushing water will lull you to sleep at night. The next morning, wade into the chilly creek and discover where it has carved smooth contours into the granite. Then sit and let the water caress your legs, like the jets of a cold water spa.

After passing the Kinney Reservoir, and probably a number of anglers, you reach the trailheads for the Pacific Crest Trail just before 8730' Ebbetts Pass. By taking the first trailhead, which heads south, you climb a ridge and curve around a slope toward Nobel Lake, which you reach in 4.3 miles. Taking the second trailhead, you climb to a viewpoint of the highway and Kinney Reservoir; continuing north past Ebbetts Peak and some small ponds and lakes, you reach Upper Kinney Lake in less than two miles. Two backpack trips worth considering are (1) have a friend drop you and a hiking buddy off near Ebbetts Pass, then meet you at Carson Pass after you've hiked north along the PCT for about 28 miles; or (2) have him meet you at Sonora Pass after you've backpacked south for about 31 miles.

Notice that the Ebbetts Pass area is granite overlain in places by more recent volcanic outpourings. Glaciers did most of the carving, so the lakes usually occupy polished granite basins. Head west from the pass, and in about two miles you come to a dirt road leading south to the Highland Lakes area. Two miles along the dirt road, you'll see the Bloomfield Campground—an unimproved area at 7800 feet (bring your own water). Highland Lakes, 8600', is also an unimproved area, with water available from the lakes and streams that you will have to treat. Trails from here lead to Upper Gardner Meadow, The Iceberg, Iceberg Meadow, Airola Peak, and Iceberg Peak, all of which are in the 160,000 acre Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Area. In fact, Highway 4's high country is flanked by wilderness areas to the north (Mokelumne Wilderness, which gained an additional 55,000 acres from the California Wilderness Act, much of it along its southern boundary), and to the south (Carson-Iceberg).

Farther west on 4, the road leads past the Hermit Valley Campground and crosses the Mokelumne River. In this valley in the early 1860's, a place called Holden's was the stopping place for travelers. At this point, the old Emigrant Road from Calaveras County turned north toward Border Ruffian Pass, the Blue Lakes, and Charity, Faith, and Hope Valleys to join with the Kit Carson Pass Road. Later, the road to Silver Mountain City was extended from here.

Just before the highway begins a long climb, a dirt road to the south



leads to the Pacific Valley Campground at 7600 feet. Hermit and Pacific Valley Campgrounds are primitive. The dirt road narrows to a hiking trail that leads into Carson-Iceberg near Bull Run Peak.

Through a couple of hairpin turns, you reach the Pacific Grade Summit at 8050 feet, which is the end of the ridge that separates the Stanislaus River and Mokelumne River drainages. From here, you can see a small reservoir called Mosquito Lake, and Camp Kilkare, a summer home development. A trail starting at the west end of the lake leads to Heiser Lake on the boundary of the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Lined with red heather and aromatic Labrador tea, this lake—with granite boulder islands—is about a mile from the road.

Farther west, after you've navigated some more hairpin turns, the major recreational attraction along the Stanislaus National Forest portion of Highway 4 is Lake Alpine. The pine-shrouded Lake Alpine is on the Alpine County-Calaveras County line at 7320 feet, 50 miles from Angels Camp. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company created the lake with a dam across Silver Creek, a tributary of the Stanislaus River. The old Emigrant Road, which went through Silver Creek Valley, was inundated by the 180 acre, 40'-deep lake. Motor boating is allowed here and the lake is stocked by the Department of Fish and Game with rainbow trout. Four developed, and one undeveloped overflow, drive-in campgrounds and a backpacker's campground provide site for campers. The more luxurious Alpine Resort also provides accommodations. These facilities and picnic areas are usually open from June 15 to October 15.

One good reason for the backpacker's campground is that the 186 mile Tahoe-Yosemite Trail runs by the eastern end of the lake. To head south on this trail, start at the east end of Silver Valley Campground. In about a mile, up and over a low ridge, you'll reach a meadow at Duck Lake (watch for mosquitoes in the early season) on the border of the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. Rock Lake, a shallow, marshy body of water that can make for a warm swim, is farther on—4.5 miles from Lake Alpine. To head north on the TYT, starting across the highway from the major camping area. You'll quickly get a view of the Mokelumne Tetons, Mokelumne Peak, and Mokelumne River. In about 4 miles, you'll reach the Mokelumne Wilderness. Around Lake Alpine itself, trails lead to two volcanic ridges—Osborne Point on the western side and Inspiration Point on the southeast. Gracing these ridges, the broad sunflower heads of mule ears add yellow to the reddish-brown of the soil.

Enjoy the Ebbetts Pass area while you can. In the winter, this entire stretch of "narrowed deer trail" from Lake Alpine east to the Highway 4-Highway 89 Junction lies quietly under a blanket of snow.

Four books that will help you explore the trails along Highway 4, all by Wilderness Press, are *Sierra North* by Thomas Winnett, *Pacific Crest Trail: Volume 1- California* by Winnett and others, *Tahoe-Yosemite Trail* by Thomas Winnett, and the *High Sierra Hiking Guide #18, Sonora Pass* (which includes Ebbetts Pass) by Jeffrey P. Schaffer. The U.S.G.S. quadrangle topo maps covering this area are: Silver Lake (north of, but not including Lake Alpine), Markleeville (Ebbetts Pass, Mosquito Lake), Topaz Lake (Wolf Creek Meadows), Sonora Pass (southern East Fork Carson River), Dardanelles (eastern Lake Alpine), and Big Meadows (west end of Lake Alpine).

For up-to-date information and permits for backpacking trips into the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, call the Stanislaus National Forest's Calaveras Ranger District at 209-795-1381 or the Toiyabe National Forest's Carson Ranger District at 702-882-2766. For Mokelumne Wilderness information, call the Eldorado National Forest at 916-644-6048.

If you'll be hauling a trailer, you should know that the Highway Department warns against trailers longer than 25 feet, due to the twisty and narrow nature of this stretch of highway.

Southeast of Lake Alpine, the Volcanic Inspiration Point gives views of several reservoirs of the Stanislaus River.

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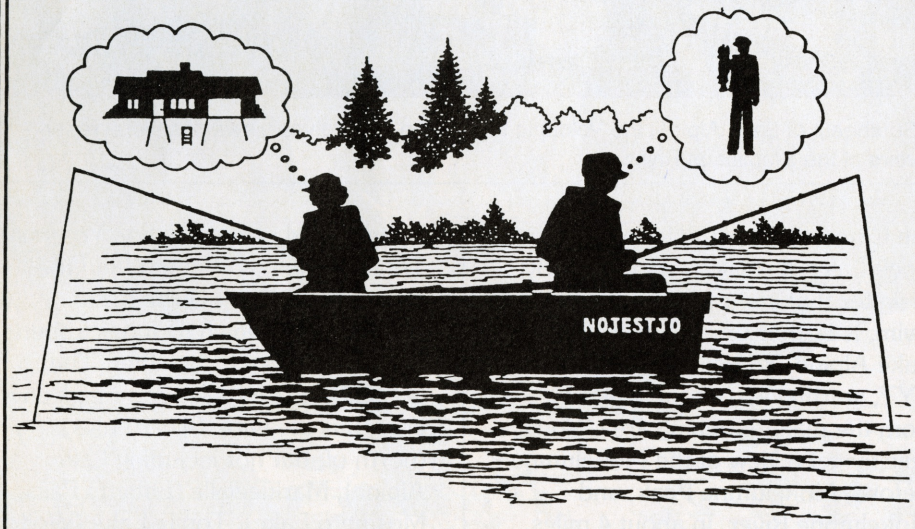

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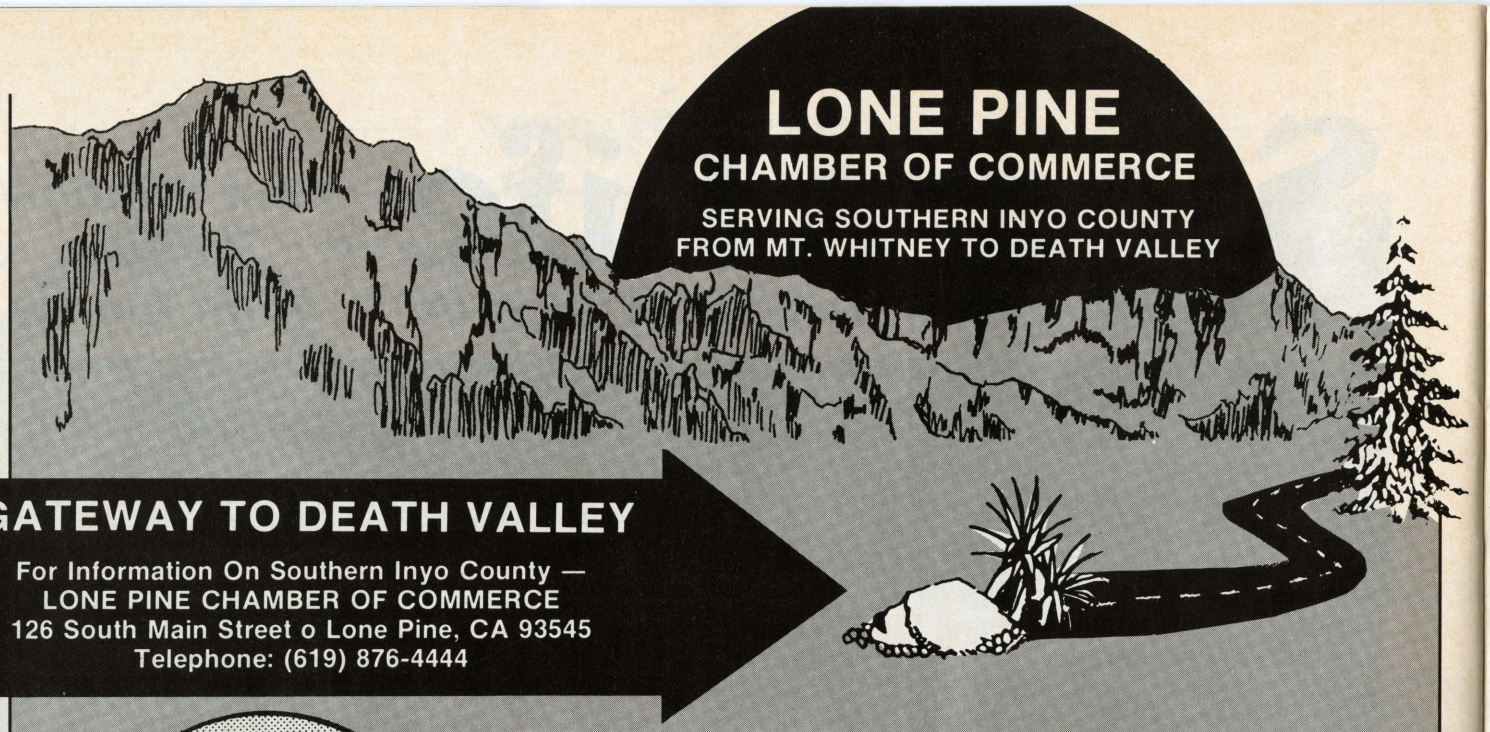

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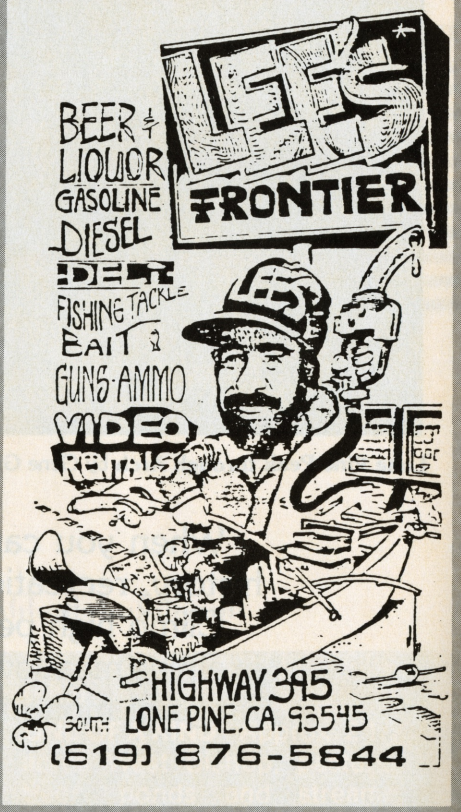

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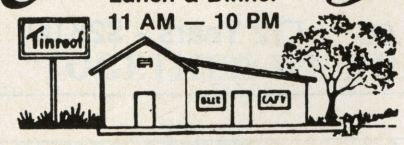

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GAINES from page 15

over me. I can feel the tender plants sprouting on my banks. I can feel deer, heron and bobcat leave their tracks on my shores."

Because Gaines felt himself-in fact all of humanity—intrinsically linked with nature, his writings occasionally reflect an overworked conscience. At times, it seemed, guilt assailed him for his inability to live the perfectly biodegradable life: "I have not lived lightly on this earth," he editorialized, "but have consumed, directly or indirectly, more than my share or need of water, topsoil, oil and other resources. I have fathered two children who will also burden this overcrowded planet."

David Gaines' greatest accomplishment was to assure that the fate of Mono Lake got a fair hearing. Like Thoreau and Muir, he championed Nature in both his written and spoken words. Like them, also, he was scientist, philosopher, and politician. Heady company, yet Gaines' legacy may be every bit as enduring as those two predecessors, for he promulgated a basic bill of rights for nature that has been accepted by the courts: Aquatic systems have a right to life, too. Diversions, the courts have ruled, cannot be single-purpose. Nor can they work to the detriment or exclusion of other uses. In other words, a minimum flow of water must be maintained in all streams to support public-trust rights. That means, no river can be dried up, no marsh drained, no lake eliminated. It is a concept that extends far beyond the shores of Mono Lake; it stands to have an enormous impact on the way resources are divided up throughout the West.

Such an accomplishment would have been impossible were it not for Gaines' unique talent for forging compromise. He was a master at balancing the needs of competing groups, for example, the local community, the Forest Service, the environmentalists and the DWP. Although Gaines, through the MLC, sued Los Angeles to limit its diversion of water from Mono's tributaries, he still managed to maintain an amicable dialogue with the city.

One can't help wondering: If David Gaines had never existed, would someone else have spearheaded the movement, driving him or herself to the point of exhaustion in order to save Mono Lake? At least one MLC Board member, Genny Smith, doubts it. In the recent MLC newsletter she writes, "Who else was dedicated enough, or young and foolish enough, to believe that one could win against giant DWP?"

And believe he did, right down to his marrow. So imbued was he with nature that it seemed to well up inside of him, like volcanic magma, until it burst forth in speech and writing: ". . . as long as the birds return and the flowers bloom, I will dream of a time when we value blue skies more than new automobiles, count our wealth in joy rather than possessions, and dwell in peace and balance with the earth. I am not without hope."

Thanks to David Gaines, neither are we.

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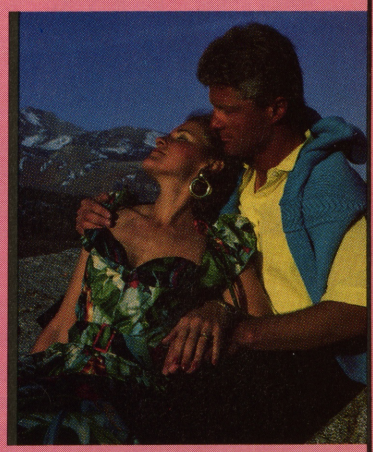

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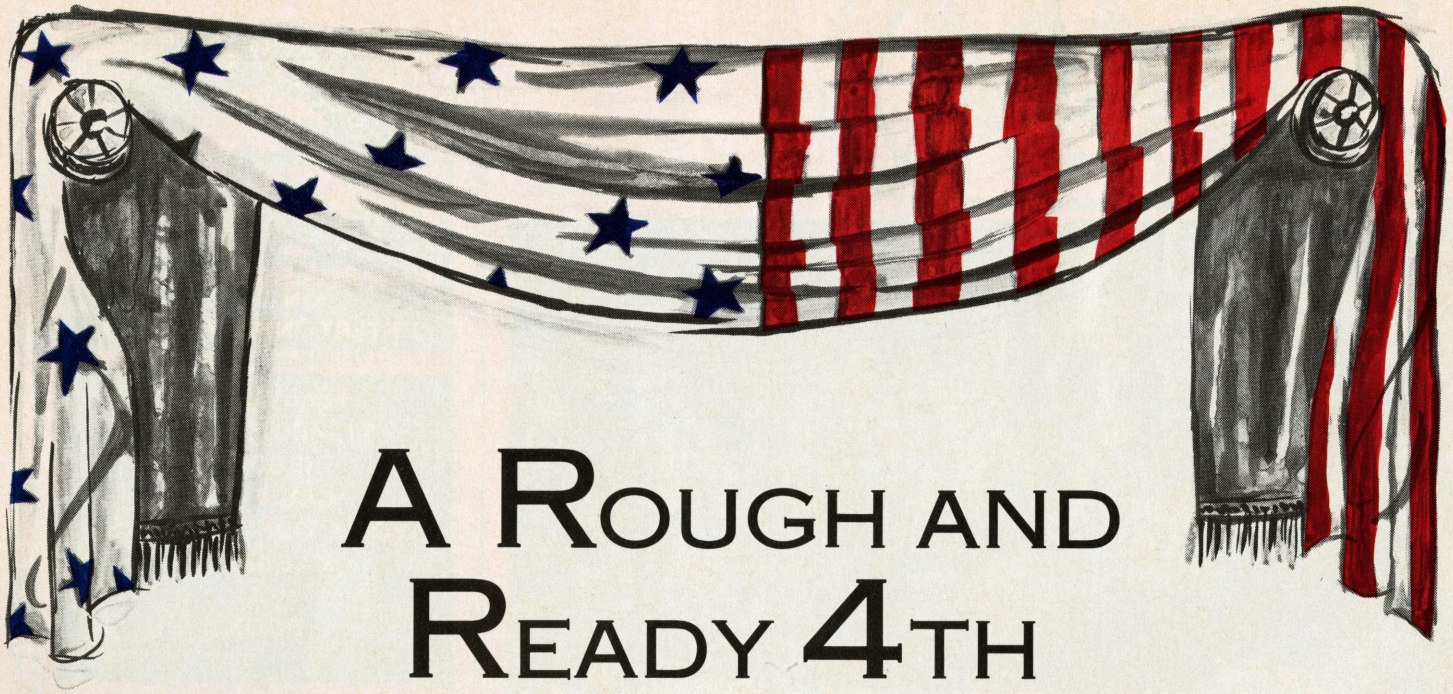

A Rough and Ready 4th

by Hugh Bennett

In 1849, a wagon train of intrepid pioneers crossed into California, up and over the crest of the Sierra, and down the western slope towards the gold fields. Arriving in late September, they had barely beaten the winter snows.

The men of the party had put in a lot of trail time lately. First they had fought in the Mexican War with Zachary "Rough and Ready" Taylor, the recently elected 12th President of the United States. After returning home to Wisconsin, flushed with pride, they decided to test their mettle and join the gold rush. They proudly painted the words "ROUGH 'N' READY" on the sides of their dozen covered wagons and started west.

As they crossed the Rockies, they had the uneasy feeling they might be passing over veins of gold right beneath their feet, but they pushed on. The same feeling assailed them as they headed up the east side of the Sierra, but still they perservered. Those thoughts were quickly forgotten upon reaching Deer Creek, near Grass Valley. One of the men, Slim Judson, spotted a glint of gold in the stream bed, and they knew they had arrived. To the new camp they gave the name carried by their wagons—"Rough and Ready."

The diggings proved to be rich and word spread: "Nuggets as big as walnuts!" Other miners swarmed in to stake claims, and within weeks the boom camp had 6,000 residents, including 150 slaves. When a man named Missionary J. Dunleavy set up the first saloon, the camp became a town.

To the growing community came blacksmiths, harness makers, stable keepers, boardinghouse owners, merchants, clerks, assayers and others needed to carry on the town's business.

With prosperity came gamblers, risk-takers, parasites, roughs, toughs and other adventurers in such numbers that law and order was a distant dream. Still, Rough and Ready prided itself on being able to handle its own affairs. In keeping with its name, a vigilante committee was formed. It warmed to the task by promptly hanging two men accused of murder.

When men get together, talk invariably turns to injustices, real and perceived. And when a fast-talker from Boston swindled a local miner, Ed Ek, out of $200, the people of Rough and Ready had even more than usual to talk about. Ek got his friends together for a meeting on the ground floor of the Rough and Ready hotel, where the court of law shared space with the saloon and four faro tables. Besides Ek's troubles, they griped about the new taxes being proposed for mining claims; and about the fact that Rough and Ready had recently been passed up as the county seat. The liquor flowed, as did the verbiage, and in a couple of hours Rough and Ready was a self-proclaimed republic, complete with a president, E. F. Brundage, who quickly issued a proclamation seceding from the United States. The new nation adopted a constitution and passed a resolution excluding any and all "foreigners." They then passed a tax—exclusively on Hi Adams—after which they rode him out of town.

The secession of Rough and Ready from the United States caused little stir on the national scene, thus giving the new political entity time to work on its future. For most townspeople, though, life was pretty much the same: The gold fields gaveth by day, and Missionary J. Dunleavy tooketh by night.

Someone designed a flag, which fluttered over the new republic for several weeks, even as they made plans for celebrating July 4th. And what a celebration it would be!

Freight wagons arrived loaded with fireworks and liquor. Red, white and blue bunting festooned Main Street. A tall pine became the liberty pole, symbolizing the Boston Elm meeting place of the Sons of Liberty.

The schedule of events would start with dynamite blasts, anvil shots and firecrackers to awaken those not already alert to the excitement. Then the gala event, the parade, followed by races and games, a picnic, and a fight between a range bull and a grizzly bear. Later there would be literary exercises and plenty of speeches, including a reading of the Declaration of Independence. The day would be capped off with still more fireworks and a dance at the Rough and Ready hotel.

At some moment during the preparation, while the townspeople were caught up in the anticipatory excitement of the Fourth, the idea must have dawned on the town genius that Rough and Ready had placed itself in an odd situation. Having seceded from the union, they could not, in clear conscience, celebrate someone else's Independence day as their own. Clearly, Rough and Ready could not have both. One or the other would have to be sacrificed.

A meeting was hastily called. There was a large contingent of people who complained that it didn't seem fair to miss the fun, especially after all their preparations. "The biggest celebration of the year," someone wailed, "and we gotta miss it." That seemed to say it all. And when someone leaped to his feet with a proposal to rejoin the union, the idea swept through the populace as quickly as the secession movement had 12 weeks before. By acclimation, the act of secession was rescinded.

The celebration went on as planned. The winners of the contests proudly showed off their prizes, the losers their aches and pains. The children were angelic as they led off the parade. The orators roamed desultorily from Gold to God to Country, and back again, passing up many good places to stop. The listeners took the extra windage in good spirits, however, figuring it was a small price to pay to be back in the U.S.A.

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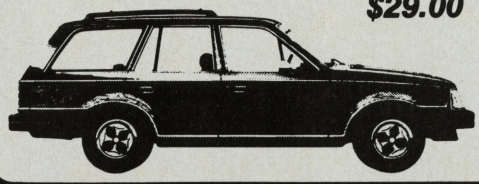
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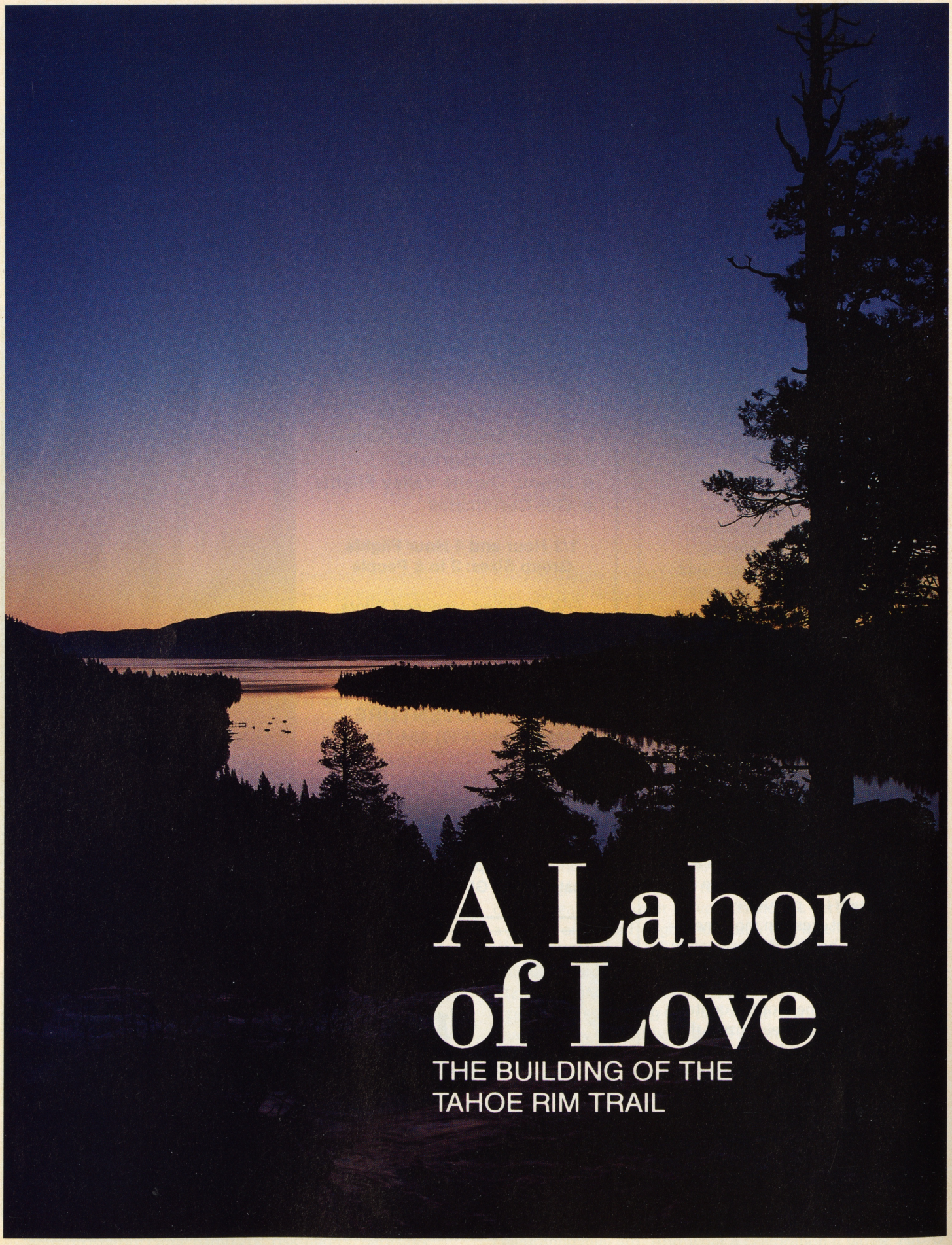

A Labor of Love

THE BUILDING OF THE TAHOE RIM TRAIL

By Steve Boga

Photo by Tracy Hartenstein

"Wanted: Volunteers to help build a 152-mile hiking and equestrian trail to encircle Lake Tahoe. Must be willing to give up precious weekends and vacation time to perform what will sometimes be back-breaking labor of love. Applicants should have high regard for nature, be able to thrive at high altitude, and have a facility for at least one of the following tools: hoe, axe, shovel, pick, rake, pruning shears, chain saw, pencil, telephone, typewriter, computer."

Sound like your idea of a fun summer? Need a new cause? Hobby? If you are answering "No" to these questions, it's probably because you haven't met Vicki Raucci Gonzales, Executive Director of the Tahoe Rim Trail. When she speaks of the project that is the loadstone of her life, she talks in exclamation points. "There are a lot of benefits in getting involved in this project," she says in her standard salespitch. "First of all, it's something that is going to be here for a long time after we're all gone. Second, it gives you a chance to get into the backcountry. And a chance to work with people you wouldn't have met otherwise."

By setting a near-workaholic example herself, Raucci has helped to convince countless others to lend their time, sweat, money and brains to the completion of the Tahoe Rim Trail. She has done everything from teaching proper trail construction techniques to pitching the program to wading through mounds of paperwork spewed out by the job—from environmental assessments to money matters. It seems that in the machinery of every successful project there is a driving force in human form; for the Tahoe Rim Trail, that force is Vicki Raucci, just as it has been for the past four years.

The idea didn't originate with Raucci, however. This sort of grassroots land management dates at least to 1921 when Benton McKaye first conceived of a 2,100-mile hiking trail from Maine to Georgia. The idea became reality when volunteers took up the cause, organized themselves into work crews and laid the Appalachian Trail.

The idea for a Tahoe Rim Trail began to take focus in 1980 when Glenn Hampton, a U.S. Forest Service recreation officer, moved from Southern California to a job with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. As a first-time viewer of the lake, he saw things others didn't—and didn't see things he thought he should. "Why isn't there a trail around the lake?" he asked, provoking others to ask the same question.

Unfortunately for those seeking government assistance, the question was being asked at the wrong time. The federal government, just waking up to its mounting deficit, was not predisposed to giving money to anything as frivolous as trail building. (The United States Forest Service had more money for trail maintenance 10 years ago than it does today.) It was clear that a Tahoe Rim Trail would have to be funded by the private sector.

About that time, the Appalachian Trail Club in Boston decided to respond to the many calls they had received over the years from folks wanting to get involved in a volunteer effort like the one the ATC had headed for more than half a century. Pursuant to that, club members worked with the USFS to form the National Volunteer Project. Using funds from various foundations, it spurred seven volunteer projects around the country, one of which was the Tahoe Rim Trail.

A board of directors was established in 1981. The Alpine Winter Foundation donated $25,000 as seed money, and in 1983 Raucci was hired as director. She laughs when she

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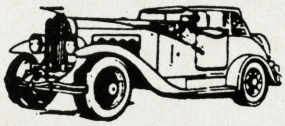

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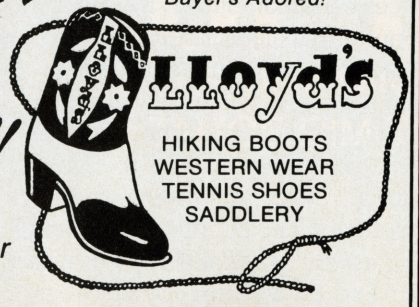

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remembers that time. "They called me up and said, 'Can you start tomorrow?' . . . Things were a little disorganized back then."

Now things are more organized, but no less complicated. Blazing trails just isn't what it used to be back in Kit Carson's day. Modern-day bushwackers and trailblazers are prohibited from hacking their way willy-nilly through the wilderness. First, prospective routes must be scouted and marked with pink ribbons. Then a review team looks over the route; if it's acceptable, an environmental study is conducted to gauge the trail's impact on soils, plants, wildlife and any archeological artifacts. In all, the area is inspected by a botanist, a hydrologist, a wildlife biologist and an archeologist. A written Environmental Impact Report follows. Then approval from the Forest Service and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency must be obtained. Finally, in the best of cases, construction begins.

"The goal is to make the rim wilderness more accessible with the least possible impact on the land."

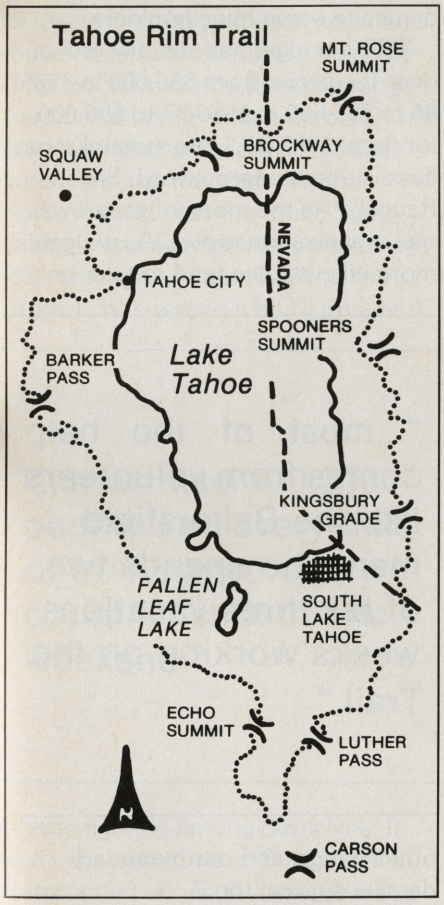
The review team is part of a system of "checks and balances" necessary to assure that an improper route is not chosen. The goal is to make the rim wilderness more accessible with the least possible impact on the land.

When it is completed, the trail will cut a 18-24" swath along the ridges that surround Lake Tahoe. Passing through some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world, it will range in elevation from 7,000' to more than 9,000'. It will afford hikers sublime panoramas of Lake Tahoe and its protective rim of peaks. Those who complete the entire loop will pass through Basque sheep

country, by old Washoe Indian hunting grounds, and through six counties, three national forests and two states. Completing such a trek will eventually carry the prestige that comes with doing the John Muir, Appalachian or Pacific Crest Trails.

Whether or not the Tahoe Rim Trail is completed by its 1991 target date depends largely on the continued growth of two things: contributions and volunteers. Money and Manpower. Both have come in from all over the country—and beyond. Membership donations have arrived from as far away as China, volunteer applications from as far away as Finland. Still, the beat goes on: money must be raised—and spent—and workers found and worked.

Just how much money does it take to build a trail? The estimate is



The Tahoe Rim Trail will utilize 55 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail on the west side of Lake Tahoe. Of the 97 miles remaining, 33 have been constructed, leaving 64 miles to be completed.

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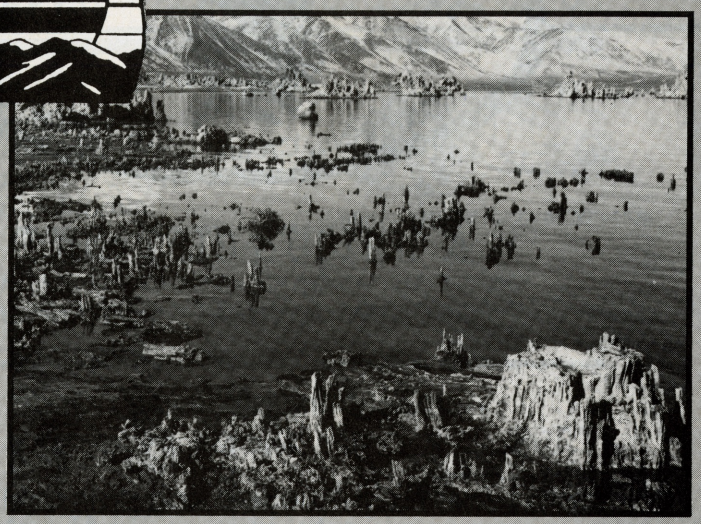

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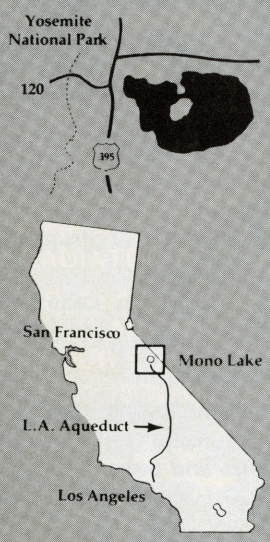

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FISH TALES DRAWING WINNERS

Four astute fishermen figured out which of the four fish stories in our March/April 1988 issue was a real "Fish Tale". It was *"The Pond"*

Winners are:

H. C. Mahon of Yorba Linda, CA
John W. Cooper, Sr. of Buena Park, CA
Terrence A. Lee of Chicago, IL
Tom Jackson of Crowley Lake, CA

about $5,000 for an "average" mile, but there are damn few average miles in the Sierra. Actual construction costs vary in direct proportion to changes in the landscape. "One mile they might zip right through," says Olive Smith, Raucci's trusted assistant and the only other paid member of the staff. "Another mile, if there is heavy brush or boulders, it might cost $20,000. Last year we had to call on the forest service to dynamite some huge boulders."

TRT's budget has steadily grown over the years, from $36,000 in 1985-86 to $55,000 in 1986-87 to $96,000 for fiscal 1987-88. Unfortunately, success is a two-edged sword. Says Raucci: "As the momentum grows, our organization grows. As we get more efficient, we tend to take on other things, and our budgetary demands grow, too."

"...most of the help comes from volunteers like the Bakersfield man who spends two of his three vacations weeks working on the Trail."

It is estimated that $500,000 will be needed to build the remaining trail and trailheads and to keep the project moving ahead. Without divine intervention, that money will come from private donations, membership dues, fund raising events, grants, sales of TRT trinkets—like T-shirts, bumper stickers ("We are Building the Tahoe Rim Trail: Join Us"), polo shirts, belt buckles—and from their "Adopt a Mile" program, in which a business can give $5,000 for the right to build and maintain a particular mile of trail.

Although budget worries are an axe forever hanging over their heads, the TRT board refuses to seek government money. "We're

proud of the fact that we've done this on our own," Raucci says. "We have never actively sought any government funding. Without it, we have more freedom."

At least once, personal biases have threatened that freedom. Such was the case during the 1986/87 off-season, when a minority faction put forth a measure that would have banned horses from the Tahoe Rim Trail. The anti-horse measure was defeated, but only after an acrimonious debate that cost the group not only much of its precious planning period but many of its members. "It's not that these people weren't dedicated, it's just that they felt that horses would ruin the trail," Smith said. "It was sad because, after they lost, they never came back to the project. We wasted a lot of time and

"...if we had 100,000 people and every mile of trail staked out, we could finish it in one weekend."

energy fighting among ourselves. It was very unfortunate. But ultimately it strengthened us. Our membership tripled soon after that."

As for workers, they have come from all over the country. Though most of the volunteer applications are from the Sierra community, or Northern California and Nevada, Raucci and Smith spread the word beyond those boundaries. They are presently waiting to hear from a Finnish boy who promised to come work on the trail for six months this year. So far, everyone from Boy Scouts, service clubs, a sheriff's search and rescue possee, and the California Conversation Corps have worked on the trail.

Continued on page 61

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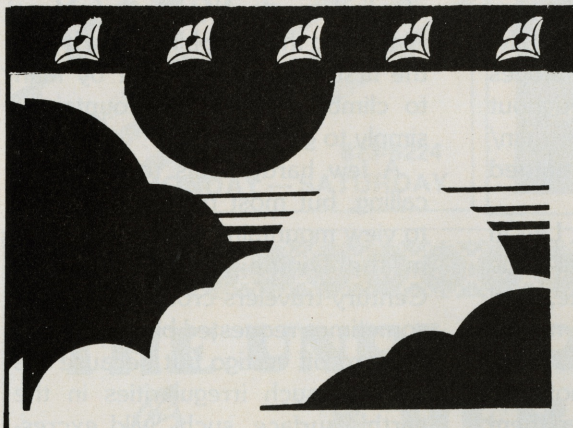

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TAHOE CHALET INN

"Of Man and Mountains"

By Steve Boga

"Climbing (is) one of the best things—maybe the best thing—in life, assuming that one would never play shortstop for the Dodgers."

—David Roberts, 1980's

Man's relationship with the earth's mountains has shifted dramatically over the years. Prior to the mid-19th Century, it would have been difficult to find anyone to express such a fondness for climbing. On the contrary, mountains have long filled man with a sense of forboding. He has frequently embodied them with spirits—often evil ones—and because he feared the wrath of those spirits, he managed to keep his distance, worshipping mountains from afar—if in fact he knew anything of them at all. Eventually, hunters ascended the lower slopes in pursuit of game, but throughout most of human history the man/mountain relationship remained tenuous at best.

One can readily see why. Life in the mountains can be brutal—due primarily to terrain, climate, and isolation. The tilt of the land makes every task more laborious. Extra energy must be expended not only to drag loads uphill but to keep them from sliding downhill. More energy requires more food; but farming, too, is arduous, mostly because mountain topsoil is always trying to find its way to sea level.

In spite of the drawbacks, a few societies—most notably in Tibet and the Andean countries—have settled and survived in the rarefied air of the mountains. Today, some people live their whole lives at high altitude, working and playing as normally as lowlanders do.

Their success has been a function of an amazing physiological adaptation. Indians of the high Andes, for example, have about 20 per cent more blood than we do. And that extra blood is almost exclusively red corpuscles, which contain the vital hemoglobin needed to catch and absorb more oxygen. What's more, an Andean heart pumps harder at those heights, and consequently is about one-fifth larger than ours.

The early mountain people were settlers, not climbers. The idea of summitting a peak for the sheer joy of it was an alien concept. But in the historic year, 1492, Antoine de Ville, Chamberlain to King Charles VIII of France, obeyed his majesty's royal command by leading a party of climbers to the top of Mont Aiguille, in the Dauphine Alps. It was the first recorded attempt by man to climb a significant mountain—simply to get to the top.

A few hardy souls took up the calling, but most people continued to view mountains as horrible faults in the Divine Plan. Eighteenth Century travelers crossing the Alps sometimes requested blindfolds, not to ward off vertigo but because the sight of such irregularities in the earth's surface, such "wild excrescences of Nature," offended their sense of harmony. An old Chinese proverb captured the prevailing attitude: "There are many paths to the top of the mountain, but the view is always the same."

Then, in 1854, a Britisher on his honeymoon, Sir Alfred Wills, climbed the difficult Mt. Wetterhorn (12,166), in Switzerland. This ushered in the Golden Age of Mountaineering, and in the next 16 years, Britons climbed every one of the principal peaks in Europe. As they did so, they passed on their enthusiasm to their Swiss, French and Italian guides. Mountain climbing was now a legitimate—albeit risky—sport in its own right.

A century later, climbers had significantly elevated the risk. In 1950, a French expedition led by Maurice Herzog summitted Annapurna (26,502), the tenth highest mountain in the world. On mankind's 23rd attempt, he had finally succeeded in conquering an "eight-thousander" (a mountain more than 8,000 meters high—there are 14 in the world). The cost was great, though, as frostbite forced the amputation of all of Herzog's fingers and toes.

There now existed a core group of hearty climbers who were blind to risk. By 1960 U.S., European and Japanese expeditions had summitted all but one of the 14 eight-thousanders.

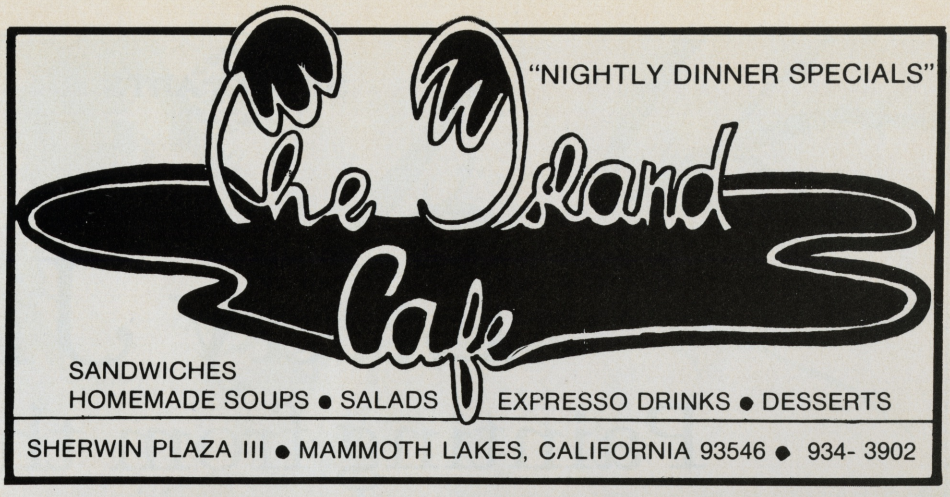
By the 1980's, technology had rendered accessible—and climbable—almost every route in the world. For many, this changed the rules of the climbing game. The emphasis, they felt, must now be on dance rather than destination, on art rather than altitude. Bold, innovative athletes like John Bachar in rock climbing and Rinhold Messner in mountain climbing were performing extraordinary solos with little or no equipment (in 1980 Messner soloed Everest without oxygen), adding to the list of important questions people asked. Besides "what was climbed?" one had also to ask "how was it climbed?"

It certainly is a question that needs to be asked. We're talking style points here. It's another way of saying the end does not justify the means . . . on or off the mountain.

ALPENGLOW from page 19
explains why mountaineers at high altitude experience such deep blue skies. And why yellow, orange, and red, which are not scattered as much, penetrate the atmosphere and are visible to observers at lower altitudes, often as spectacular sunrises and sunsets. The fact that green light is not appreciably scattered leads to a peculiar occurrence called the "Green Flash." This strange phenomenon is observed as a short burst of green light when the sun is just below the horizon. The colors which are scattered — blue, indigo, and violet — combine to give the upper atmosphere a purplish appearance. In the morning just before the first light of the alpenglow, the high mountains will be awash in purplish light. And after sunset the same purplish light will conclude the alpenglow color show. In both cases this marvelous twilight is visible because of the earth's shadow.

The full color sequence of the alpenglow is best observed when the horizon is clear of haze and clouds. The mountain should be high and have a broad east face for sunrise alpenglow, or a broad west face for sunset alpenglow. The east face of Mt. Whitney is ideal for sunrise alpenglow, as is the west face of Half Dome for sunset alpenglow. But if the conditions are right, most of the high peaks of the Sierra will display alpenglow. The clear cold mornings and evenings of winter allow the red, orange and yellow light to pass through the atmosphere relatively unobstructed. During the warmer summer months, the alpenglow colors tend to be muted by atmospheric haze. Since red is absorbed the least, the summer alpenglow may be reduced to a faint red light striking the peaks.

If you can't get away to the mountains to observe the alpenglow, there is a substitute: cloud glow. If the horizon is clear at sunrise or sunset, high clouds directly overhead will display the same color sequence as alpenglow. To those of us who enjoy the high country, cloud glow will never replace the blush of alpenglow on High Sierra peaks.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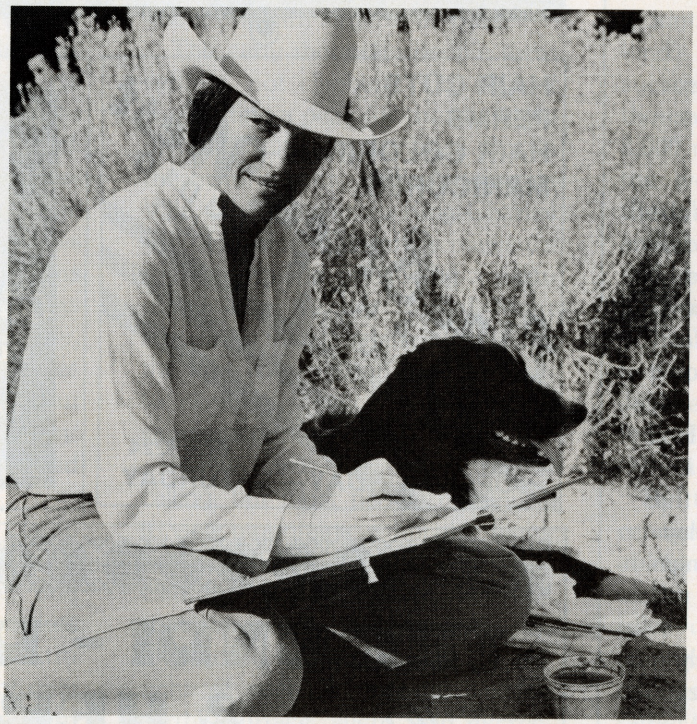
Lady Jill
Painting from the Soul

By Karen Northcutt and Bill Hess

At home in the mountains or deserts of the American West, Lady Jill Mueller brings out the subtle as well as the obvious beauty and moods of the wide open spaces she dearly loves. Her paintings capture the feelings and emotions, as well as the natural grandeur, of nature's gift from God . . . the great outdoors.

Through her talents, Lady Jill brings this beauty to her collectors so they may share the same feelings she experiences while painting on location. The feeling of "being there" brings out emotions that just cannot be matched by working from a photograph.



Lady Jill paints on location in order to capture the emotion of nature. Photo by Bill Hess.

Painting is Lady Jill's lifetime career. A fourth generation artist, she was born in Hollywood, California in 1944. She spent the majority of her early life pursuing her dream through art classes, art clubs, and shows. She majored in Fine Arts at several Southern California colleges, including a well-earned scholarship at the Laguna Beach School of Art and Design. Jill borrowed the "Lady" from an 18th century Englishwoman by the name of Lady Jane Digby . . . a very independent woman of her time.

Although her family still remains in Southern California, she says she was lucky enough to "get out."

Her artistic career was "on hold" for twelve years. For six of those years she was married and working as a school bus driver. In her quest to leave Southern California, Lady Jill divorced, moved to Lake Tahoe and eventually to Marin County. During the following six years she worked as a substitute school bus driver, a maid, a charter bus driver, and also drove buses for Golden State Transit.

With her bus driving background and experience, she applied for a job with Greyhound, but they were not hiring women. Because she was qualified to drive commercial buses, she filed and won a lawsuit against Greyhound Bus Lines for discriminating against women who wanted to drive buses.

It was after the settlement from Greyhound that Lady Jill decided to "sink or swim" as an artist. Her inspiration to return to painting came when her mother, a 1933 graduate from the San Diego Art Institute, gave Jill her fine art brushes from college and some Windsor and Newton paints (an English brand of watercolor paints).

With these tools, some encouragement from her mother, and a three month transit strike, Lady Jill regained her desire to paint.

In 1977 Lady Jill stored most of her possessions, and with the help of some friends, built a "home" on the back of a pick-up. She set out to paint on location, primarily in the Sierra, and did odd jobs (as long as they were outside)

"Love Along Strawberry Creek," Transparent Watercolor, 22″ × 30″, Great Basin Project. Color by Howard Herz

Two of Lady Jill's watercolors which will go on tour as part of the greas basin Project.
ABOVE: *"Aspen Patterns."* BELOW: *"Approaching Storm — Stella Lake."*

to supplement her income from selling art.

Lady Jill traveled and painted at each opportunity, and her art income initially came from the sale of "original" note cards. She would draw original pen and ink vignettes of the High Sierra during the day, then return to the truck at night to add watercolor wash to each one.

She sold at art shows, flea markets, or anywhere she could make a sale.

In 1979 Lady Jill settled down for seven years in Northern California tending cows and fences on a large dairy farm in trade for room and board.

This time allowed Lady Jill to paint with dedicated intensity. Her work progressed at a feverish pace after taking a workshop in Calistoga, California given by Alaskan artist Nancy Stonington. Jill recalls, "I have some artist friends that claim I advanced in my art career in one year as much as other artists had in ten."

Her interest in the Sierra and concern with the preservation of Mono Lake prompted her to volunteer her services to the Mono Lake Committee. She painted the original mural on the Mono Lake Committee. She painted the original mural on the Mono Lake Committee's building in Lee Vining. In remembering Mono Lake Committee founder David Gaines, Lady Jill recalled how particular David was about this mural.

"He personally supervised the painting of the birds," she said. "He had to have them just right."

In 1981 she had a benefit showing of her work at Gull Lake, on the June Lake loop, and at the Mono County courthouse, with one-half of the proceeds going to the Mono Lake Committee. Lady Jill recently supervised her nephew (another artist in the family) in the restoration efforts of the original mural.

A self-made woman, she has continued her pursuit of nature study, composition, lighting, color and the delicate personality of transparent watercolor. She not only looks to herself for improvement and creativity, but also studies with other professional artists when she can.

Although a landscape artist at heart, her animal friends (dogs, and especially her horses) are included in her work. She rides on horseback up into the high country to sketch, and often her transportation becomes part of her scenes.

When not painting on location, Lady Jill is usually in her studio in picturesque Yerington, Nevada. There she works on her etchings and large transparent watercolors, for which she is most well known.

Lady Jill teaches watercolor techniques at seminars in the Yosemite Valley; in mountain-high Hope Valley, near Lake Tahoe; and in the Eastern High Sierra resort of Mammoth Lakes.

Lady Jill demonstrates a personal touch with private showings for her collectors, and has an annual Open Studio show. She has had numerous one-woman shows and also participates with other professional artists in a few quality shows, including several years at the prestigious Death Valley '49er Encampment Invitational Western Art Show. Her work has also appeared at Whiskey Flat Days, in Kernville, California and Mule Days in Bishop.

Lady Jill is quite enchanted with Nevada, and enjoys her time spent painting in remote locales there. Her newest love is Nevada's first national park, the Great Basin National Park, near the Utah border. As Jill describes the nation's newest park, "It totally grasps the whole Great Basin character in a nutshell—with added attractions from sagebrush to Bristlecone Pines."

Calling it her gift to the people of Nevada, Lady Jill has embarked on the most ambitious project of her career. Entitled "Nevada's Great Basin National Park, Impressions from the Soul: An Artist's View," Lady Jill will complete a 44 piece series of paintings and etchings of the four seasons of the Park.

To research this project, Lady Jill borrowed a car, a tent, a sleeping bag and a Coleman stove and set out with her dog, Clyde, to sketch, photograph and "steep" herself into the Park.

Because Lady Jill works on location, her interpretations of this remote jewel of Nevada will bring to life this magnificent landscape for the viewing public across the United States.

The exhibit touring schedule will premier on August 13, 1988 in Baker, Nevada at the Great Basin National Park's Visitor Center. From there, the exhibit will travel to Carson City at the Nevada State museum and be on display from October to January 1989.

During 1989, the exhibit will continue to travel to eleven other locales in Nevada, concluding with a three month exhibit in Las Vegas at the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society beginning in January 1990. Plans are currently underway for the exhibit to also travel throughout California, Utah, and in Washington, D.C.

In this frenetic society, one must find an inner mood to balance today's pace with the quiet beauty of nature, and Lady Jill provides this balance with her paintings. Her collectors say her work captures the grandeur of nature and gives them a sense of peacefulness.

A copy of the Great Basin exhibit schedule may be obtained by writing:

Lady Jill's Fine Arts
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TAHOE TRAIL from page 53

The Trail is in fact a classic example of what can be accomplished through group efforts. Last year Southwest Gas adopted a mile. Sending their employees to Tahoe from as far away as Phoenix, they built their mile in four hours.

Nevertheless, most of the help comes from individual volunteers—like the Bakersfield man who spends two of his three vacation weeks working on the trail; or the San Francisco wilderness writer who last summer brought up two separate groups of people to work.

A few people, like South Shore Coordinator Charlie Smith, appear to be in it for the duration. Last season—May to October—Smith had crews in the backcountry 3-7 days per week. Asked why, he explained, "The pay is nothing, but, boy, are the views spectacular. And so is the help."

Many of you reading this while safely settled into your strata-loungers may be thinking, "Well, it sounds like a good cause and I might be interested, but I'm not swinging a pickaxe for nobody." Well, listen up! The Tahoe Rim Trail needs more than just grunts. Jobs include trail route scouting, preparation of environmental assessment reports, staking the centerline of the trail, organizing work parties, recruiting volunteers, providing leadership on the trail, fund raising, administering the project, developing interpretive and educational information, publicity and promotions, designing trailheads and campsites, and photographing segments of the trail before, during and after construction.

Things would seem to be going well for the Tahoe Rim Trail. In 1986 they had 425 members who had made contributions to its operating fund. In 1987, the list had lengthened to 1,350. At last count, more than 1,000 different people had trooped out to the trail to cut brush, dig trail, pull roots and rocks from its path and design runoff channels to protect it in wet seasons. And the upcoming season promises to be the best yet. Southwest Gas and Chevron are adopting miles, and REI has committed two busloads of employees—75 in all—to construct three miles of trail.

But there are still 64 miles of trail yet to be completed and what Raucci and Smith fear most is complacency. "There's no question we still desperately need both money and muscle," she says. "After all, if we had 100,000 people and every mile of trail staked out, we could finish it in one weekend."

If you'd like to contribute time or money to help build the Tahoe Rim Trail, call Vicki Raucci or Olive Smith at (916) 577-0676, or write to them at P.O. Box 10156, So. Lake Tahoe, CA 95731. If you want to plug into a trail-building work party at the last minute, call (916) 577-8783. You will get a recording that tells you that week's trail-building schedule, plus who to meet and what to bring. Tell them Sierra Life sent you.

Tim Snyder Photo

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TRAIL TRASH

by William D. Dooley

It all started as I was making the sometimes rocky transition from childhood to adolescence. I began to notice an attraction to certain slender, delicate, supple things—sleek little items with smooth skin, straight backs and just a hint of ribs showing. No matter how well they looked when made up or cared for, the average work models, just didn't do it for me.

Instead I seemed to gravitate, perhaps even levitate, panting, towards the lithe, lively, garishly painted numbers quick to respond to my every touch and movement. I must confess that, like many others before me, I have let this infatuation lead to my downfall. No doubt some of you readers share this fatal attraction and have recognized it immediately. I am referring, of course, to my unhealthy, depraved craving for canoes. (Anyone who thought I was writing about something else must have picked up the wrong magazine.)

My childhood canoe had begun its journey down the river of life as a 55-gallon drum. My father had split it lengthwise and then welded the halves together, end-to-end. It resembled a long bath tub divided in the center, with two nifty compartments in which to ride. Actually, Dad had been using it as a feeder for his horses. Hay was placed in one half and grain in the other. What a waste of high-tech gear!

One summer day, my friend (or, as Dad would say, my accomplice) Mike arrived in his truck, contemplating a day of excitement and adventure. He had brought along the usual crowd of well-wishers, doom-sayers, and technical advisors that seemed to hover around our disastrous outings. (Many of these guys, I might mention, went on to become newsmen.)

My father took a dim view of our aquatic activities, saying, "Drowned boys milk no cows." (He's fond of quoting *Poor Richard's Almanac.*) Mike and I loaded the canoe/horse trough into the back of his truck when Dad wasn't watching. Pop did come over to wish us well on our adventure, the nature of which he wasn't sure about. His exact words were, "Where are you slinking off to . . . and why are the horses eating off paper plates?" With that bit of encouragement, we headed for the river in a cloud of dust and gravel.

The Kings River, rippling its way out of the Sierra, slows as it reaches the lower elevations to a leisurely pace suited to the needs of ranchers, farmers, and kids with horse trough canoes. Our entry point was about 100 yards above a weir, one of those dams with adjustable heights achieved by adding or removing boards. This particular weir was set at its maximum height, with a full stream of water flowing over the top. On the other side, the water dropped about 15 feet into a 200-yard-long cauldron of waves and whirlpools: the perfect spot for a crew of demented teenagers to test their stolen horse trough.

We found that our newfound canoe handled quite well in the quiet water above the weir, even carrying four people with ease. Mike noted that, from a design standpoint, it handled much like a 55-gallon drum. After suggesting that we accompany him over the Weir, Mike noted that it handled even better with only one passenger.

Mike threw us his "those who are about to die" gladiator salute and set out. We watched in horrified fascination as he was drawn closer to the 15-foot drop. He began to back-paddle furiously, his paddle churning the water into a creamy froth.

The disaster unfolded before our eyes. The horse trough did a two-and-one-half gainer and entered the cataract gracefully. Mike did not fare so well. For a moment he appeared suspended over the cauldron, still back-paddling furiously. Even the serious encouragement of impending death could not grant him the ability to defy gravity forever, though, and he dropped into the raging torrent.

Our small band of survivors agreed to hold a short memorial service for Mike. We had taken the precaution of emptying our pockets—as one of our doom-sayers had commented, "No use losing your personal effects, too." As we split up his personal effects and argued over who had to tell his mother, Mike surfaced about 300 yards downstream, still back-paddling. To this day, Mike throws me his gladiator salute whenever he sees me, and the horses are still eating off paper plates.

I purchased my first real canoe after a short stint in the army (where I learned an awful lot about back-paddling) and ran most California rivers uneventfully, except for one 50-mile trip on the Kings River from Pine Flat Dam to my house.

The first 35 miles were ordinary, even boring, for my High Sierra buddy, Jerry Caddick, and me. The tedium was quickly broken by a patrol boat with red light, siren and two irate-looking officers of the law, who questioned us as to our activities, including our entry and exit points on the trip. The idea of a 50-mile day trip just for fun obviously sounded suspicious to them, since one surly deputy kept his hand on his .45 throughout the interrogation. After we convinced them that we concealed neither illegal substances nor illegal aliens, they advised us that we were in a "no paddle" zone. Free-fire zones, kill zones and even no parking zones were familiar to us, but this "no paddle" zone caught us off guard.

Realizing that we were not going to be arrested or shot for suspected terrorist or smuggling activities, we burst out laughing. This did not help our case. The surly deputy unsnapped his holster as his partner warned us never to be caught in that area again carrying a concealed paddle. Jerry has always said that with proper motivation, anything is possible. It was interesting to note the look on the faces of water-skiers when we overtook them.

Over the years, I've engaged in discussions, debates and arguments concerning the risks of river running. Most people take the uneducated stance that white water and rocks are the biggest hazards enountered on rivers. I just smile knowingly, because people with serious river time know that the real dangers are horse troughs and paddle cops.

Jerry Caddick, when not talking to paddle cops, is a pilot with the U.S. Marine Corp. A month ago, he was involved in a crash of his F/A 18 during an air show in Orange County. The crash was televised nationally, so I'm sure some of you witnessed it. I would like to wish Jerry a speedy recovery from all of us misadventurers.

Summer in Olympic Valley, Lake Tahoe

Photo by Tracy Hartenstein

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